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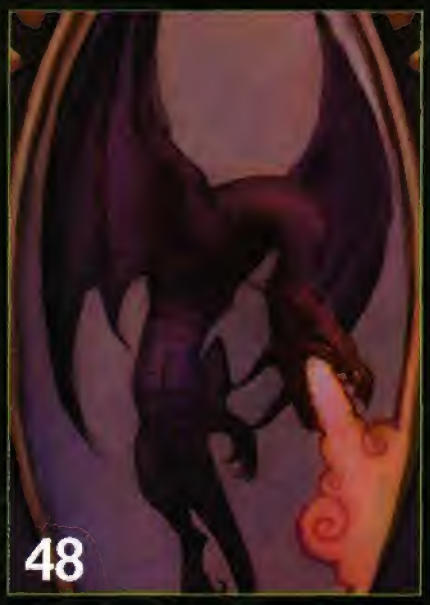

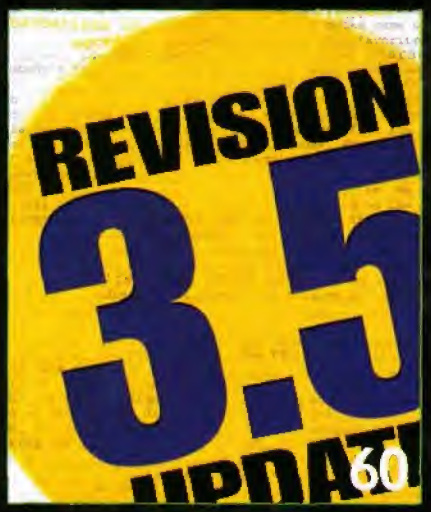

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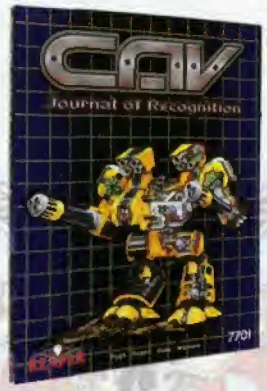

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FREE DM SCREEN

We're not kidding: *Dragon* issue #310 will include a complete D&D 3.5 DM screen. If you subscribe by phone or through the Paizo website by June 15th this year, your subscription will include issue #310, and you'll get the DM screen when that issue arrives.

WEB GUY

If you read last month's editorial, you already know that Paizo just hired a brand-new web expert. Happy to jump on board with this new-fangled "Internet" thing, the *Dragon* staff can finally promise regular updates, some special content, and other interesting stuff on the web. Check out the ever-expanding site at **www.paizo.com**.

ORIGINS AWARDS

Every industry has its awards, and the gaming industry is no exception. If you haven't heard of the Origins awards, you should know that they're a group of awards for games and gaming professionals. Because you're a gamer, you can vote on these awards and help give recognition to the folks who make the games that you enjoy. For information on casting your vote, check out the ballot on page 97 of this issue.

BUY BACK ISSUES

We've been overjoyed with your response to our back issue program, and lots of our readers seem happy to have access to hard-to-find issues and a chance to fill in the gaps in their collections. If you haven't yet, take a look at the back-issue sales info at **www.pazio.com/backissues.**

THE BRIAR KING

Regular readers of *Dragon* will recognize the name Gregory Keyes from the excellent Fool Wolf stories that have appeared in the magazine. *The Briar King*, a gripping fantasy novel, is Greg's latest work, and it's packed with ideas just waiting to make their way into a D&D game. Go check it out.

WYRM'S **TURN**

FROM THE EDITOR
WESTEROS

Great settings don't come along everyday, so when one does I like to pay attention. It's not even easy to define what makes a setting great. One qualification, maybe even the one that I like best, is that the world, universe, multiverse, or whatever you want to call it, has to be able to hold more than one story. We know, the other players and I, that when we sit down at the table we're going to be telling and playing through the story of the assembled characters, but we also pretend, as much as we can, that others live and walk through the world that we've imagined.

Early in January, back in the office fresh from a week-long company holiday to celebrate the release of *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* and Christmas, Matt Sernett (*Dragon* Senior Editor), the *Dungeon* Staff (Chris Thomasson), and I were sitting around the office talking about just such a world. We started off just by wondering aloud how you could make characters in Middle Earth who weren't Frodo seem important, how any tasks during the War of the Rings could seem pressing when everyone would know that the real struggle, the real fate of the world, lay on a chain around the neck of a hobbit. It took us only a second or two to realize how small a concern that really was because Middle Earth is deep enough, and interesting enough, that you can move from location to location and time to time and find a nearly endless number of great places to run a game. The Old Forest and the Barrow-downs, with their ancient anger and enigmatic guardians appealed to Matt, I couldn't stop talking about how cool it would be to run a game set in the time of the Nûmenórean Kings and their struggle against the Witch King of Angmar, and Chris realized that he could play a troll in both of those campaigns, so he was happy too.

Westeros, the setting created by George R. R. Martin in his award-winning series A Song of Ice and Fire, is another such world. Its complex, layered history leaves players and DMs interested in playing a campaign in the setting with options beyond following along with the plot of the novel series. We've devoted a good-sized chunk of this issue to exploring two of the campaigns that could take place in the setting, but there are literally dozens more. The ancient city of Valyria is but a memory as the novels take place, but from the hints of history dolled out in the books, the rise and fall of Valyria's dragon-backed dominance sounds like a game I'd like to run. I'd run a game focused on the mercantile and swashbuckling intrigue of traders and pirates among the Summer Isles, featuring shipboard combat and city-based adventures in the free cities of Braavos and Myr. For games closer to the focus of the novels, I'd let the players run with the Free Folk as they struggled to find the horn of winter, let them sail against the deadly Euron Crow's Eye from the Iron Islands, or take a turn on the smuggling vessel of Davos the smuggler before he earned his knighthood from Stannis Baratheon.

It's not that I'll ever have time to run all of these games, or even play in them, but the fact that the setting is complex enough to hold them means that when I start a Westeros campaign, there's room for players to put the story of their character's family in those places, there's a sense that these campaigns are happening, and if the players and I want a change of pace without creating a new setting or new characters, a new focus for the campaign is only a ship's journey away.

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DRAGON MAGIC

Dragon Magic
by Monte Cook
Beings of ancient power, dragons have crafted a magic of their own. Get new rules, new spells, and new ideas about how magic works in *Dragon's* second Open Game Content article.

Mind Flayers
by Penny Williams
Mind flayers emerge from the Underdark prepared for war, and their newly grown symbiot weapons and carapaces open up new options for both players and DMs.

Psychic Boxing
by E.W. Morton
The fighting styles of *Oriental Adventures* meet the mental prowess of the *Psionics Handbook*. Can you combine mental and physical discipline to travel the path of the One?

Dragon Equipment
by Eric Cagle
They're smarter than you, they're stronger than you, and now they've got armor. Dragons get equipment like tail blades and magical saddles, and your characters can discover the magic inherent in a dragon's scales.

Monster Combos
by Skip Williams
Monsters aren't just lumps of experience points waiting around to help characters gain levels—check out these great strategies and interesting encounters. Great for monster PCs too!

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Tools of the Trade

As a DM, I would like to include a time-saving suggestion for other DMs and players who use miniatures. One thing that can really bog down a playing session is the cartography involved. I like to have the encounter areas on the battlemat before playing to save time within the game. However this either gives away the whole layout to the players, or you have to try to cover any unseen rooms—which means they know something is there. Conversely you can get the players to map as they go, but that really chews up time!

Lately I've been pre-drawing sections (hallways, rooms, encounter areas, and so on) on transparent overhead projection paper, and when the players enter a new area, I hand them the map, which sits nicely on the battlemat. The pieces of various pages fit together like a puzzle, and play can ensue on the transparencies without any delay! Also, it allows a map-minded player to draw the area accurately on the battlemat or make their own copy on graph paper. This allows the DM to have fun drawing in as much (or as little) detail as they like. You can include the kind of details that allow your players to use their skills (like Balance, Climb, Jump, Hide, Swim, and Tumble), areas of concealment and cover can be further explored, items laying around on the floor that the characters might use, ropes hanging from the ceiling, and any other details that affect play. Using different colors adds flavor to the mapping experience, as does adding in elements to suit your various NPCs' quirks (like shadowy areas, a pond, an escape hatch, and so on).

I enjoy testing the ingenuity of my players, and having detailed, miniatures-scale maps allow the players to better visualize their environment and promotes better roleplaying of the various character classes.

For those who do not want to invest in a battlemat, drawing a 1 inch grid on some plank paper or cardboard, and placing that grid inside plastic page protectors available at most drug stores (and anywhere that sells school supplies) can supply you with a very portable and versatile "battlemat" that you can make as big or as small as you need by using multiple pages. The overhead projection pens that you would use on a regular battlemat work wonderfully on the sheet protectors too.

Brad Stewart
Port Moody, British Columbia

Although I've pretty much finished the migration from monster tokens and battlemats to miniatures and Dwarven Forge's Master Maze products, I always like to hear about cheap miniatures options or additions. A carefully prepared and scientifically applied survey of a couple of guys who sit near me have me convinced that D&D is just a better game when you play with miniatures—I know that some folks prefer a more abstract approach to the game, but I really like that fact that everyone at the table knows where the orc is standing during a battle and whether or not the wizard caught the cleric in his fireball. If folks write in with other low-cost miniatures ideas like this, we'll run the tips in an upcoming issue.

Jesse Decker
Editor-in-Chief

Stoked? Like a Fire?

Hey there! I just read "The Invincible Blade" in issue #305, and I am stoked! My characters are always about style, and I always enjoy articles like this! (Other readers who enjoyed it should also check out #294's "Words to Live By" and #289's "Playful Phoenix First vs. Four Scholars Boxing.") Also, being a fencer in real life, I particularly enjoyed the flourishes for classical swordsmanship. I'd like to point out

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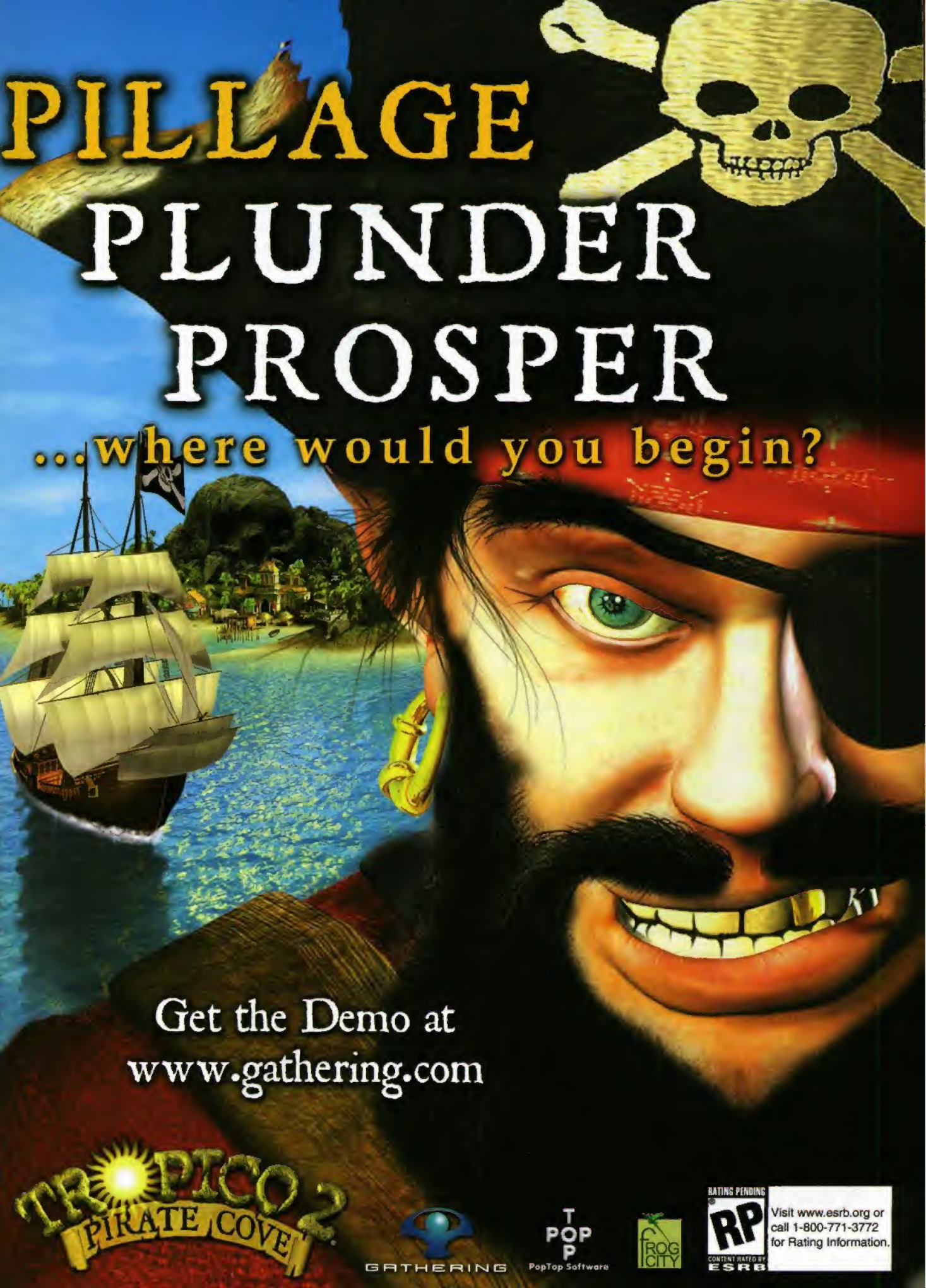
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ZŌGŌNIA

BY TONY MOSELEY

though, that a Spring Attack would be like a balestra maneuver only if the attacker moved back after attacking. When using Spring Attack, one can also continue to move in the same direction, jabbing your enemy while running past, which would be more like the flèche (a French term for "arrow"). One who makes a fleche tries to emulate an arrow, diving at his opponent in a near-suicidal manner, which makes it well suited to the Power Attack feat. Also, it adds style to salute before you attack a worthy opponent or begin a one-on-one match with "En Guarde!" or "Alle!" (Ah-lay!).

Anyway, although I always use the rules to my advantage, its nice to see articles that help characters be cool without being invincible. It adds so much to the fun!

I also had a suggestion not related to that article—perhaps you could put in some tips on how a mage could research metamagic feats? I love to play a wizard and research new spells, but when I have ideas for new metamagic feats I wish there were some guidelines on how one could research those as well.

Michael Haneline
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Researching a new metamagic feat wouldn't be easy, but the difficulty comes not in deciding how long such research would takes a character but rather in you, the player, designing the details of a new metamagic feat.

Unfortunately, there's no simple formula for figuring out how many levels a metamagic feat should raise a spell's effective level. Once you've chosen the effect that you want a feat to give, you' have to go through the work of playtesting the effect to determine how many levels the feat should add to the spell. With a metamagic feat, you'll get a good idea just by comparing metamagiced spells of one level to non-metamagiced spells of higher levels. For example, an empowered fireball *can deal a maximum damage of 10d6 x 1.5. That makes it a pretty good match with* cone of cold, *a 5th-level spell that can deal a maximum of 15d6, making the fact that Empower Spell adds 2 levels to spells affected by the feat seem like a balanced choice.*

Jesse Decker

Dundracon

This year at Dundracon I ran a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS tournament. Here is a short synopsis:

CAPTION CONTEST

What's so funny? Why, you are! So send your caption for this cartoon to **Caption/DRAGON Magazine, 3245 146th PL SE Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007** by July 1st, and be sure to write "issue #307" somewhere on your entry. Your caption will undergo rigorous testing by the editors, and if it passes, it just might be printed in an upcoming issue. There's no need to cut up your magazine. If you want to include the drawing, send in a photocopy.

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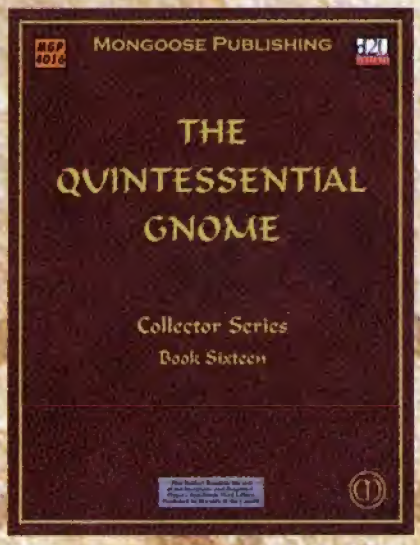
The Ultimate Adventurer Requires Quintessential Tools . . .



The essential guide for any gnome, the information contained within will enable any gnome character to stand out from the crowd.

This tome of knowledge provides a wealth of information for the conjurer, presenting the mechanics for those wizards and sorcerers who like to pluck aid for themselves from thin air.

The derro are an insidious and much misunderstood race. Bringing their secrets and hidden culture to the fore, this sourcebook, aimed at players and Games Masters alike allows both to use, or hunt, this evil race.

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B-Minus 0 Days and counting . . .

Quadripartite
By Peter Aperlo
A minion of chaos has come to the Prime Material Plane from the void of the Far Realms to terrorize and conquer in the name of its masters. The PCs must act quickly to assemble a legendary artifact powerful enough to weaken the minion so it can be defeated. A D&D adventure for four 14th-level PCs.

SUBSCRIBER BONUS SECTION!

Fish Story
By Adam Jortner
Locathah have invaded, or so it seems. But why, after all these peaceful years, have the fish creatures abandoned their home? The PCs must journey to the flooded village of Waterford and delve into the past to discover the cause of the current commotion and uncover the secret history of the region. A D&D adventure for four 7th-level PCs.

Plus, "Critical Threats," "Maps of Mystery," and more!

HIJINX
A d20 Mini-Game of Rock and Roll Mystery
By Jeff Quick

Strap on your guitar, pump the amplifiers to 11, and get ready to take your sensational new band to the top of the charts. But being a rock and roll star isn't just about getting famous and making loads of money. It's also about *having fabulous adventures.*

In the proud tradition of Josie and the Pussycats, Jabberjaw, the Banana Splits, and . . . uh, the Monkees, you'll solve mysteries and crimes the old fashioned way—by winning over the hearts of evil men by rocking and rolling with irresistible music. In this Mini-Game inspired by classic Saturday morning cartoons, you finally get to be the "meddling kids" you've always envied.

DUNGEON #99

POLYHEDRON #158

The land of Sunder was in trouble: The gods had forsaken it, and magic was nearly gone. Then four groups of six heroes each set out on a quest to find a mystic sword, the Sword of Hope, that would grant miracles. Each group faced individual hardships such as ghost ships, pirates, a dragon, and some really hungry dogs. These hardships eliminated all but the most hardy who braved the crypts on "The Lost Isle." Finally, six heroes entered the inner crypts and found more than just a sword—they found themselves and realized that they had achieved all their goals along the quest. In fact there was no Sword of Hope, but there was a Sword of Kings . . . but that's another story.

Jeff A. Hatch
Address Withheld

I'm guessing that the PCs who faced the hungry dogs on the Lost Isle were the ones who lived to make it to the end of the adventure. Let this be a lesson to us all: Remember to buy several days of trails rations when you create your character.

Matthew Sernett
Senior Editor

Back to the Basics

I'd like to congratulate Robin Laws on his article in *Dragon* #303, "Negotiating with your DM." It gave me a fresh look and new start in a campaign that bogged down after some disputes. My DM is an Author, and he enjoys working out entire storylines, whereas I'm a Director, giving the players much more freedom and relying on their cooperation. As a player, I grew irritated by the lack of freedom and utter ignorance of players' actions. As a DM, I got annoyed by the lack of player contribution and felt my efforts were in vain.

In fact, for some time now I have felt that there's more need for articles, that don't have anything to do with combat or even rules in general. What's the need for lengthy rules when keeping a group together is tough? Seeing that RPGs are a very abstract medium, it isn't hard to imagine this sort of friction and the need to resolve it accordingly. As Mr. Laws wrote, a solution isn't as self-evident as it might seem. Show us the possibilities! What about an article that introduces a concept called "Traits," similar to Feats but they assign personality instead if combat benefits or game mechanics?

Name and
Address Withheld

Free XP! Really!

I have been an avid DM for almost 16 years, and I have enjoyed your magazine for awhile now. I like the new format and 3rd edition material even more than the older issues. Good job.

I have a quick question. The cover of #303 claimed "Free XP: No Weapons Needed". The article that I assumed went with this proclamation was "Saying the Right Things." Although the article covered the use of social skills in various situations, I did not see any reference to the amount of XP that should be awarded. Did I miss it, or should we assign an ad hoc amount as per the *Dungeon Master's Guide?* Or was there a more refined process for XP awards that was left out? Just curious.

Keep the prestige classes and spells coming (feats don't hurt either).

Adam Bishop
Gainesville, FL

In 3rd edition D&D, you get experience whenever you overcome a challenge, so if you use any of the social skills to talk your way out of a fight or another challenge, you get XP as if you defeated the monsters.

Jesse Decker

This is outlined on page 165 of the Dungeon Master's Guide. *It states there that sneaking past a minotaur to get to a vault should grant as much experience as fighting past the minotaur—if reaching the vault is the goal. Thus, if you can talk the minotaur into allowing you in the vault, you should get experience too. Convincing, bullying, or tricking a creature into defeat is just like using a* charm *spell to defeat it (except that the creature might get wise and change its mind). If you're not giving XP for social solutions to problems, you should be. After all, what's tougher: killing the troll or convincing it to be a nice person?*

Matthew Sernett

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MAGIC THE GATHERING

THE DEVIOUS DM
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SCREEN

by Gary Gygax

Q: KNOWLEDGE CHECK

What magazine did TSR publish before launching *The Dragon?*

Answer on page 18.

A well-rounded DM must at least occasionally take a place on the other side of the screen. Conversely, the best players need to have experience in game mastering, planning, preparing, and running the show. In such manner the participants gain an understanding of the whole of the roleplaying game. It is my belief that all who engage in such dual roles are better for it. This one comes strictly from the eyes of the player and the PCs involved, and it also nicely introduces the guest columnist whose stories you will now and then be treated to. The DM in the following account was Rob Kuntz, and that worthy will be supplying you with some of his lively stories of antics and adventures in the Greyhawk Campaign, so be prepared!

When Mordenkainen and Bigby were of middling level, I loved to have the pair adventure together accompanied by others, and Rob was heartily sick of having the pair ride roughshod over his monsters. He was not without victories of his own however, and on this particular adventure, I fortunately had the foresight to inform the devious DM before play started that Mordenkainen and Bigby were being observed by others of their group through a *crystal ball.*

In the course of the adventure, the two spellcasters encountered a vast chamber containing two great pillars of solid ivory, columns at least 10 feet in diameter and 60 feet high. The massive throne at the end of the gargantuan hall was to be examined first, as it held a metal figure that appeared potentially threatening. As Mordenkainen and Bigby neared the dais throne, the statue became animate, stood upright, and advanced towards the duo with ponderous steps, clearly an iron golem to the mages' experienced eyes.

Retreating hastily, Mordenkainen readied and cast a *rock to mud* spell so that the floor before the oncoming automaton was a small morass. Bigby, of course, had ready a *mud to rock* spell, so that as the iron golem waded through the mire, it would become caught fast in solid stone. The metal golem was about to step into the trap—but no! It levitated and moved slowly ahead, passing above the muddy area. Seeing that, both mages took to the air themselves, flying to the tops of the ivory pillars. Undaunted, the iron golem began to throw itself against the pillars, and each soon showed cracks, so toppling was certain. Down came the two adventurers to face the monster toe to toe. Before spells could inflict much harm, though, the golem's whip of cockatrice feathers turned Mordenkainen to stone, and Bigby failed a save versus the poison on the golem's sword. In a single round, two mighty wizards were naught but a stone statue and a corpse!

From the citadel came a rescue party led by Nigby the magic-user. The fighters Yrag and Felnorith were there to smite the metal monster, as Rigby the cleric went to attend to the poisoned Bigby. Observing that their weapons were not damaging the golem, the two warriors made a dash for the dais, looking frantically for some device that might deactivate the automaton. Indeed, they found a strange sword and dagger. These weapons proved to be the key to besting the golem, and that was done. Quickly bringing the two mages back to life with stored wishes, the group beat a hasty retreat to their home.

The obvious lessons from this encounter were: Don't push the DM too far; when you manage to save your best PCs from extinction, it's time to quit; and no matter how powerful PCs are, a determined DM can top whatever they have to put on the table. By following such schooling, the adventure can work out well for all concerned.

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

WINNER
"Someone remind me to increase my Use Magic Device skill next level."
Congratulations Joshua Hanna!
Sterling, VA

RUNNER-UP
"Now I know why they're called death sticks. I'm gonna kill those camels."
Ian Kelso
Cocoa Beach, FL

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CULTURAL BIAS
VARIANT REACTION MODIFIERS

by Andy Collins

In most cases, a game's rules are crafted to produce a specific range of results. For instance, D&D's rules are written so that most classes have a particular specialty: fighters are best at combat, rogues are the premier skill-users, clerics are the best healers, and so on. It's easy to mistake a character's limitations as weaknesses and worry that the character "needs more power" when really the character just needs to recognize which situations are optimal or suboptimal for his participation.

For instance, a player who wants his bard to be as potent a spellcaster as the sorcerer is likely to be disappointed and might lobby the DM for additional abilities—failing to recognize the bard's other talents such as bardic music, armor and weapon proficiencies, and a wide skill list. If the DM gives the character extra powers—such as more spells per day, or a wider spell list—he risks making that character more powerful than the others in the party, even though he was only trying to make the player happy with his choice of class.

While a little imbalance isn't going to threaten the average game—no game is perfectly balanced, and you might well encounter situations where your group's tastes require house rules to create or restore a balanced game—the most enjoyable games tend to be those where every player is on a level playing field. Using the example above, imagine playing the sorcerer and finding out that the bard can cast as many spells as you and still retains all his other class features. You're likely to feel rightfully frustrated, since the bard has "taken over" your specialty while keeping his own, too.

To check if your house rule might be creating an imbalanced game, ask these three questions:

1) Does the house rule reduce the number of viable options in the game? Roleplaying games tend to be most enjoyable when they allow players (and characters) a wide variety of options to accomplish their goals, both in character creation and in game play itself. For instance, imagine if the DM also allowed the orc as an option (without a level adjustment). The orc's +4 Strength adjustment clearly outshines the other races, making them poor choices for the class. Without adding other significant drawbacks, the orc quickly becomes the only reasonable choice for the fighter class, and the number of viable options in the game decreases. The player unlucky enough to be already playing the dwarf or half-orc fighter starts wondering if he's wasting his time, and frustration mounts.

2) Does the house rule let one character class poach too much on another class's specialty? For instance, it's easy to see a DM granting the ranger more skill points per level to make up for perceived deficiencies. While a ranger with 8 skill points per level no doubt seems like an exciting character to play, this decision threatens the rogue's place as the most skill-focused character of the group. In this case, you might be better off going no higher than 6 skill points per level—the rogue still has more points and a wider skill list, so she isn't likely to feel too threatened.

3) Does the rule help the NPCs more than the PCs? If your house rule tends to favor the NPCs, it might not be worth keeping, even if it "solves" a perceived problem.

If your answer to even one of these questions is yes, you should strongly consider discussing with the other players the house rule's value to the game. In trying to solve a minor dilemma, you may have created a much more significant (and insidious) crisis. Review these questions before you adopt any house rule and think about them when you look at the rule below.

House Rule: Interaction Penalties

The *Player's Handbook* describes a world where the various races get along with one another relatively well. But what if that isn't true in your game? Maybe your dwarves live in ghettos, or innocent halflings are watched with one hand on your purse, or your humans and elves live with the enmity over a not-yet-forgotten war in their past. In this case, consider introducing penalties to the various interaction skills—Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information—when used on a member of a different race.

For instance, if humans have an innate mistrust of all things elven, it's reasonable that any elf attempting to use the Bluff skill on a human might suffer a -2 penalty to the check. Likewise, a human asking questions in an all-dwarven community might suffer a similar penalty to Diplomacy or Gather Information checks. Intimidate is an exception to this guideline, since it relies on fear rather than trust or respect (and thus might even be more likely to succeed in such a climate, resulting in a +2 bonus!).

This house rule works best in campaigns where interaction between PCs and NPCs plays a valuable role. Be careful that you're not just telling your players that the best way to accomplish their goal is to bust heads (unless that's what you're going for).

Make the Rules

Now that you've had a chance to see a few house rules from one of Wizards of the Coast's game designers, you can join in by sending your own house rules to **scalemail@paizo.com**. We'll include the best, the funniest, and the ones that make our own characters more powerful in upcoming issues.

A: KNOWLEDGE CHECK

The magazine was called *The Strategic Review*.

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THE SILVER STRIKE GUILD

Palav hunched low in the saddle, urging his mount into a dive. The pegasus folded its wings and dropped like a stone; the two plummeted toward the ground. "Now!" Palav cried, and he began chanting, arcane energy crackling between his fingertips. The pegasus unfurled her wings and reared back, slowing her descent. Palav pointed, his lightning bolt flying true. "Gotcha!"

Palav chuckled as he watched the rider fall. "Well, at least for once his mount will feast well." He tugged lightly on the pegasus' reins as his opponent's griffon swooped down toward its former master's remains . . . .

by Christopher Campbell · illustrated by Chuck Lukcas

Dedicated to the principle of species equality, the Silver Strike Guild specializes in the liberation of oppressed mounts, specifically those with the ability to fly. Members and guildhalls of the Silver Strike Guild are scattered throughout the multiverse and on several Material Plane worlds. With intelligent winged creatures of all types as members, as well as specialized magic for use in mounted combat, Silver Strikers (as members are called) are tenacious opponents, but also valued comrades, guards, and guides.

The origins of the Silver Strike Guild lie in the past of its guildfather, Hasken Maeke. Shielded from human society by his mother, his natural curiosity and a desire to fit in moved Hasken to seek society out. Met only by prejudice and distrust toward his unusual origins, he retreated from civilization, losing himself in the untamed wilderness. For years he wandered the world, pursuing adventure and improving his skills, but always feeling disconnected from his surroundings.

And then, a chance encounter with a mysterious creature changed Hasken's life. One morning, as he lay looking up at the clouds drifting across the endless expanse of blue, a streak of silver caught his eye. Darting, dipping, and spinning through the air, the silver creature performed an aerial ballet that was beautiful and intriguing. Hasken followed the creature until it came to rest on a riverbank, and it was there Hasken took a good, long look.

As silver as the underbelly of a high-flying cloud, with the body of a powerful horse and the feathery wings of a noble eagle, Hasken immediately recognized the creature as a pegasus. However, the pegasus's coloring and the speed and grace with which it soared through the air were more dazzling than he imagined. Carefully, he crept closer to better observe the beast as it drank from the river. When he was about thirty yards away, the pegasus raised its head and spoke.

That conversation marked the beginning of the Silver Strike Guild. The language the pegasus spoke was the same tongue Hasken's mother had used to sing him to sleep at night when he was young . . . a breathy, lilting language like a whispering breeze on a summer night. Hasken understood the creature's language—the language of air elementals. The creature's name was Bolt, and the two talked into

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

The planar nature of this organization means that a wide variety of game elements can be incorporated into your campaign via the Silver Strike, from new spells and magic items to new races and settings. The half-air elemental template originally appeared in *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil*, while the air element template can be found in the *Manual of the Planes*. Air genasi are detailed in the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign Setting*. All three have been reprinted for your use.

If you don't wish the Silver Strike Guild to be a plane-spanning guild, you can scatter the guildhalls across a single continent or world, placing the main headquarters in or near a large city where flying creatures won't be hindered. Feel free to incorporate more exotic creatures into the organization, such as dragonkin from *Monsters of Faerûn* or asperis from the *Monster Manual II*.

HALF-AIR ELEMENTAL

"Half-air elemental" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature with an Intelligence score of 4 or more (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Because the half-air elemental is still mostly flesh, it cannot be of the elemental type. Instead, the creature's type changes to outsider. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted.

AC: Natural armor improves by +1.

Special Attacks: A half-air elemental retains all the special attacks of the base creature. Half-air elementals with an Intelligence or Wisdom score of 8 or higher possess the following spell-like abilities, using their level as the caster level, as specified in the table below. Each ability is usable once per day.

Level	Ability	Level	Ability
1-2	*Obscuring mist*	11-12	*Chain lightning*
3-4	*Wind wall*	13-14	*Control weather*
5-6	*Gaseous form*	15-16	*Whirlwind*
7-8	*Air walk*	17-18	*Elemental swarm**
9-10	*Control winds*	19+	*Plane shift*

*Cast as an air spell only.

Special Qualities: A half-air elemental has all the special qualities of the base creature. Half-air elementals are immune to disease and cold and gain a +4 racial bonus on Fortitude saves against poison.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Dex +2, Con +2, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +2.

Skills: A half-air elemental has 8 skill points, plus its Intelligence bonus, per Hit Die. Treat skills from the base creature's list as class skills and other skills as cross-class. If the creature has a class, it gains skills for class levels normally. Any racial bonuses that apply to the base creature apply to the half-air elemental as well.

Feats: Half-air elementals have one feat for every four levels or the base creature's total number of feats, whichever is greater.

Climate/Terrain: Same as either the base creature or an air elemental.

Organization: Same as the base creature.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

the night and well into the next morning about the past, the present, and the future.

That conversation opened up the multiverse to Hasken, as Bolt told him about the Elemental Plane of Air, about air elementals (from whom Hasken must be descended, since he understood the language), air element pegasi (of which Bolt was one), and about the wondrous freedom and exhilaration of soaring through the open sky. Confused but excited by all he heard, Hasken invited Bolt to return with him to his mother's home, where he hoped to confirm Bolt's suspicions about his origin. Hasken's adventures and wanderings had taken him far from his mother's home, and so his return home would be a long one. The journey cemented the two beings' friendship, and by the time Hasken and Bolt reached the village where Hasken's mother lived, the two were a formidable adventuring group.

Unfortunately, Hasken found his mother dying. Wishing to free herself from a secret long kept from her son, she told Hasken of her past. She was born in Blurophil, a city on the Elemental Plane of Air. She fled that city with several others to a world on the Material Plane, both to escape the strange disease known as the Iron Shadow and to conceal the shame of her unplanned pregnancy. When Bolt spoke with her in Auran, the language of air elementals, about the eradication of the Iron Shadow and the wonders of the Plane of Air that she had abandoned, a great peace came over her, and she died with a smile on her lips. Armed with the truth of his nature, a loyal companion and guide, and no more ties to the material world, Hasken set out for the Inner Planes and more adventure.

Over the next several years, Hasken and Bolt hired themselves out as guides, bodyguards, and messengers to those with need of such services on the Elemental Plane of Air. Occasional jobs took them to other planes of existence or back to the Material Plane, and they made contacts and forged many friendships throughout the multiverse. Wherever the two traveled, however, Bolt was always the subject of prejudice and callous disregard. Because he looked like a horse with wings, that is how others treated him; most people assumed he belonged to Hasken instead of the two being partners, and even though the pegasus could speak, he was summarily ignored. This arrogance on the part of bipeds irked both comrades, and they made it a point in their business dealings to stress the equality of their relationship, even going so far as to let Bolt do all the talking.

The diplomatic approach fell on deaf ears. To be sure, a few rangers, druids, and other creatures sided with the companions, agreeing that all sentient beings—regardless of appearance—should be treated equally, but scattered individuals could not affect real change. Hasken and Bolt recruited those with a like mindset, settled down in Blurophil, and officially began the Silver Strike Guild.

The first goal of the fledgling organization was the dismantling of the aerial mount industry. Both Hasken and Bolt were horrified by the trade in giant eagle and giant owl eggs and young, which boiled down to slavery in the companions' eyes. Both avian species were sentient and able to speak—many could speak Common—yet they were bought and sold on an open market as beasts of burden. The Silver Strike Guild used a combination of money, strong-arm tactics, and political leverage to eliminate the trade in Blurophil altogether, earning creatures with the ability to communicate a voice in the local government. Bolstered by its success, the Silver Strike Guild extended its influence into neighboring communities, garnered more members, and continued promoting its agenda of species equality.

To generate income for the pursuit of its goals, the Silver Strike Guild offers a number of services, from simple deliverymen to bodyguards to bounty hunters. Fees start at 10 gp per member per day (mounts count as members). Magical or mundane aerial transportation for the client costs extra, ranging from 50 gp per day for a transport mount to 1,800 gp per day for the use of a *carpet of flying*. The client is responsible for all guild members' room and board. Supplies and equipment can be purchased directly from the guild, packed and ready to go. If planar travel is involved, the client is expected to provide a route and all necessary portal keys. While the guild offices have various means of transport between their locations, use of that network is not available to clients.

SIZE AND RESOURCES

The Silver Strike's main guildhall is located in Blurophil, on the Elemental Plane of Air, and 130 members are present at any one time. While Blurophil cannot be considered a metropolis by any means, the regular use of planar portals allows more goods and people to pass through the community than normal for its size, and that is reflected in available resources. At any given time, the Silver Strike Guild can afford to spend 50,000 gp per week in the pursuit of its goals.

ALIGNMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Official policies of the Silver Strike Guild reflect a lawful neutral outlook, but members of any alignment are welcome, provided they follow the Code of Conduct (see Joining the Silver Strike Guild on page 26) and obey the various guild masters. While all guild offices are officially subject to policy dictated by the guildhall in Blurophil, most are free to operate independently as their individual guild masters see fit. Once a year, guild masters are expected to journey to Blurophil for an annual review of expenses, dues, and other guild business. All guild members are expected to obey the orders of the guild master under whose jurisdiction they are operating.

Hasken Maeke (see below) is the official head of the Silver Strike, despite his advanced age. An imposing seventy-year-old with a shock of white hair and blue-within-blue eyes, he is content to dabble in local politics and officiate at guild functions, leaving the actual management of the guild to his sons. His word is law, however, and the organization obeys his wishes.

Bolt, Hasken's loyal comrade and mount, is husband, father, grandfather, or great-grandfather to most of the air element pegasi of the Blurophil branch, although new pegasi are joining to help strengthen the bloodline. Nearing the end of his days much like his good friend, Hasken, Bolt is preparing to pass the mantle of leadership to his son, Streak. Bolt represents the interests of the non-biped members of the guild, both locally and abroad.

Hasken Maeke, male half-air elemental/half-human Rgr17: CR 19; Medium-size outsider (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 17d10; hp 98; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (*+2 spell resistance (15) leather armor*), touch 10, flat-footed 14; Atk +15/+10/+5/+0 melee (1d8/19-20 and 2d6 chaotic damage to lawful creatures, *+1 chaotic longsword*) and +15 melee (1d6/19-20 and +2d6 lawful damage to chaotic creatures, *+1 lawful short sword*), or +17/+17/+12/+7/+2 ranged (1d6+1/x3 and +1d6 cold, *+1 icy burst composite shortbow* and *+1 arrows*); SA favored enemy (orcs +4, dragons +3, aberrations +2, undead +1), spell-like abilities; SQ fight with two weapons, immunities, +4 bonus to saves against poison; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +23, Concentration +7, Handle Animal +25, Knowledge (nature) +23, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Ride (pegasus)

Alignment: Same as the base creature.

Treasure: Same as the base creature.

Advancement: Same as the base creature.

AIR ELEMENT

"Air element" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature") of the following base types: aberration, animal, beast, magical beast, plant, or vermin. The creature's type changes to elemental (air). It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Change to d8.

Speed: An air element creature has a fly speed of 100 feet, unless the base creature has a higher fly speed, with perfect maneuverability.

Special Attacks: An air element creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures suffer a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against an air element creature.

Special Qualities: An air element creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following special qualities:

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Damage reduction (see the table below).

Hit Dice	Damage Reduction
1-7	–
8-11	5/+1
12+	10/+1

If the base creature already has one or more of these special qualities, use the better value.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Change from the base creature as follows: Dex +6.

Skills: Same as the base creature. If the air element creature has an Intelligence of 4 or greater, it speaks Auran.

Feats: Same as the base creature, with the added feat of Flyby Attack.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organization: Same as the base creature.

Challenge Rating: Up to 3 HD, same as the base creature.

3 HD to 7 HD, same as the base creature +1.

8+ HD, same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: Usually neutral.

Advancement: Same as the base creature.

AIR GENASI

Air genasi see themselves as the inheritors of the sky, the wind, and the very air of the world. They are most often neutral. They appear mostly human, with one or two unusual traits reflecting their quasi-elemental nature, such as a light blue color to their skin or hair, a slight breeze in their presence at all times, or flesh that is cool to the touch. They care little for their appearance and tend to have wind-tossed hair and much-mended clothes. Their emotions can change quickly from calm reserve to great

intensity and passion. While they might seem capricious to some, they remain true to their nature and heritage.

Racial Abilities: Air genasi have the following traits:

• +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma: Air genasi are quick of hand and sharp of wit, but easily distracted and arrogant.

• Medium-size.

• Air genasi base speed is 30 feet.

• Darkvision up to 60 feet.

• *Levitate* (Sp): Air genasi can use levitate once per day as cast by a 5th-level sorcerer.

• Clerical Focus: An air genasi cleric must choose a deity who grants access to the Air domain and select Air as one of her two domains.

• +1 racial bonus on saving throws against all air spells and effects. This bonus increases by +1 for every five class levels the genasi attains.

• Breathless: Air genasi do not breathe, so they are immune to drowning, suffocation, and attacks that require inhalation (such as some types of poison).

• Outsider: Air genasi are native outsiders.

• Automatic Languages: Common, home region. Bonus Languages: Any (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

• Favored Class: Fighter.

• Level Adjustment +1: Air genasi are slightly more powerful and gain levels more slowly than most of the other common races.

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Below are a few elements designed with Silver Strike Guild in mind, but usable by any character.

BORN IN THE SADDLE [GENERAL]

You are comfortable and focused when on a mount.

Prerequisite: 4 ranks of Ride.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Ride skill checks and Concentration skill checks made while riding.

GUIDED SPELL [METAMAGIC]

Your spells zero in on a specific target.

Benefit: Only those spells delivered by a ranged touch attack can be guided. Choose a target within range before casting a guided spell. A guided spell ignores up to nine-tenths cover or concealment as it moves over, under, or around barriers, seeking that target. If a guided spell misses on its initial attack, it persists for a number of rounds equal to one-third your level (rounded down), making another ranged touch attack on your initiative each round against that target until it hits or the guided duration ends. If the target or you move out of the range of the spell, if the target gains total cover or concealment from your position, or if the line of effect for the spell is blocked, the guided spell duration immediately ends. You do not need to concentrate on a guided spell while it is attacking. A guided spell uses up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell's actual level.

TRANSFER SPELL [METAMAGIC]

You can transfer a touch spell to another creature for delivery.

+22, Wilderness Lore +23; Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track.

Fight with Two Weapons: Has the Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting feats when wearing light armor or no armor.

Immunities: Immune to cold effects and disease.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 1/day—*air walk, chain lightning, control weather, control winds, elemental swarm*, gaseous form, obscuring mist, whirlwind,* and *wind wall.* These abilities are as the spells cast by a 17th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

Spells Prepared (3/3/3/1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 1st—*pass without trace, read magic, return to the saddle**;* 2nd—*cure light wounds, protection from elements* (fire), *snare;* 3rd—*neutralize poison, remove disease, water walk;* 4th—*freedom of movement.*

Languages: Auran, Common, Draconic, Orc.

Possessions: +2 spell resistance (15) leather armor, +1 chaotic longsword, +1 lawful short sword, quiver of Ehlonna containing fifty *+1 arrows* and a *+1 icy burst composite shortbow,* iridescent spindle *ioun stone, potion of cure light wounds, potion of fly, potion of jump.*

*Cast as a cold spell only.

**See For Your Campaign.

Bolt, male air element pegasus Ftr2: CR 6; Large elemental (air); HD 4d8+12 (air element pegasus) and 2d10+6 (fighter); hp 42; Init +3; Spd 60 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect); AC 20 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +5 *+1 chain shirt barding,* +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 17; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves) and +5 melee (1d3+2, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA air mastery; SQ scent, spell-like abilities, elemental, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Listen +12, Sense Motive +7, Spot +12, Wilderness Lore +7; Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bite, hoof).

Air Mastery (Ex): Airborne creatures suffer a -1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against an air element creature.

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

Scent (Ex): An air element pegasus can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): Air element pegasi can *detect good* and *detect evil* at will within a 60-yard radius, as the spells cast by a 5th-level sorcerer.

Languages: Auran.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt barding.

MEMBERSHIP AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Rangers form the bulk of the Silver Strike Guild's members, as Hasken recruits those individuals with a kindred spirit. Effie Suresaddle (female halfling Bbn2/Clr3/Rgr5) is one such example; hailing from Waterdeep, on the planet Toril, she spends much of her time working with hippogriffs on the Elemental Plane of Air. Tolden Maeke (male air genasi Rgr12), the oldest son of Hasken and Vellia, oversees the training of new recruits in aerial combat, riding skills, and general guild practices; his four lieutenants (male human Rgr6) each command a group of ten 1st-level rangers of assorted races.

Druids, with their affinity for all creatures, support the goal of the Silver Strike Guild. Shimmer (female air element pegasus Drd5) is the most outspoken of the lot, protesting the subjugation of familiars by wizards and sorcerers. She claims the bonding process is often performed against the creature's will. Liata (female air genasi Drd2) serves as Shimmer's hands, and together the two

offer instruction to no less than twenty-four 1st-level druids, mostly half-elves and halflings from the Material Plane.

Sorcerers are drawn to the Silver Strike Guild much more than wizards, perhaps because the inherent magic within their veins earns sorcerers prejudice similar to that suffered by non-bipeds. One such sorcerer is Sitheag McBane (female fiendish harpy Sor9), who hails from the planar city of Rigus, on the Concordant Domain of the Outlands. While nominally loyal to the guild as a whole, she long ago paid to have her *mark of justice* removed (see Joining the Silver Strike); a silver lightning bolt tattoo on her left ankle serves to make fellow guild members none the wiser. Strangely enough, Sitheag's closest friend is Riiaw (male giant eagle Sor6), whom Hasken rescued from the auction block in the guild's fledgling days. A 3rd-level air genasi sorcerer assists each, and together these strange feathered friends guide the arcane development of a mixed group of nineteen 1st-level sorcerers.

Tierlane Pasquale (male half-elf Brd13), a planar bard of some note, is an ardent supporter of the Silver Strike Guild and crafts wondrous ballads about the guild's deeds, advertising the group's cause and attracting customers. Bolderan the Bugler (male dwarf Brd6) serves as the Silver Strike's official herald in Blurophil, and two sisters (female human Brd3) accompany him on drums at special ceremonies. Nine 1st-level bards round out the Silver Strike's messenger system—three human, three half-elf, and three halfling.

Of course, covert operations are necessary from time to time, especially if a mount needs to be liberated from its "owner." Enter the self-styled Silent Stalker (male half-black dragon/half-human Rog9). He heads up an elite team of five 1st-level rogues (three human and two halfling) and two 2nd-level rogues (both giant eagles), assisted by the beautiful and deadly White Orchid (female air genasi Rog4).

Spiritual guidance for the Silver Strikers comes from a variety of sources. Vellia Maeke (female air genasi Clr15) is Hasken's wife and the mother of Tolden and Parthen. A powerful cleric and her husband's junior by twenty years, she expects to take his place as head of the guild when Hasken finally passes. Justin au'Lock (male human Pal3) serves as her bodyguard and attendant. Luntr Hraldsson (male cloud giant Adp9) journeys to Blurophil regularly from Himinborg, a planar city on the Heroic Domains of Ysgard, with his message of equality and tolerance. Occasionally, he journeys to the Material Plane as well and assists in establishing remote waystations. A 4th-level adept and two 2nd-level adepts (all air genasi) minister to members as well, and a pair of giant eagles newly invested with divine ability (Adp1) hold themselves as proof that the gods support equality of the species.

Rounding out the Silver Strikers of Blurophil are Parthen Maeke (male air genasi Wiz14), Garrison Mardor (male human Ftr12), and Pontius Fileates (male human Ari7). Parthen is Tolden's younger brother, and he spends much of his time in research, both mundane and magical. He shaves his head bald and wears his *mark of justice* proudly on his forehead. Parthen has a *contingency* spell in effect at all times that triggers a *minor globe of invulnerability* if he is ever caught within the boundaries of an area effect spell not cast by himself. Garrison calls the Free City of Greyhawk home and has a special bond with griffons. He and Effie Suresaddle do not get along, although they remain civil to each other. Pontius is the Silver Strike's "ace in the hole," as it were; he sits on the city council and works diligently to promote the guild's cause. Completely smitten with Vellia, Pontius hopes the beautiful air genasi will accept his hand in marriage when Hasken meets his maker.

Benefit: Only a spell with a range of touch can be transferred with this feat. You cast a transferred spell normally and then touch the creature to whom the spell is to be transferred. That creature is not affected by the spell; instead, one of its empty hands (or a natural attack) is "armed" with the spell as you normally are after casting the spell (including the duration the creature can hold the charge, the number of recipients, and the instances in which the spell is wasted). The spell is discharged with the first successful touch attack or attack the creature makes with that empty hand (or natural attack). The creature does not provoke an attack of opportunity when making the touch attack. Duration and effect remain based on you, the original caster. If you cast another spell, the transferred spell is cancelled. A transferred spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

CLOUDBANK

Conjuration (Creation)
Level: Drd 4, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Effect: Cloud that spreads in a 30-ft. radius, 10 ft. high
Duration: 1 hour/2 levels (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

A billowy cloud masses at the point you designate. The cloud is spongy but substantial, providing a solid surface upon which you can walk or climb (Climb check DC 10). The cloud persists until the duration expires or you dismiss it. The cloud remains stationary in all but severe winds (31+ mph), which move the cloud 25 feet every round in whichever direction the wind blows.

The cloud material has a hardness of 0 and 1 hit points per inch of thickness.

Arcane Material Component: A tuft of cotton or wool.

ICE CLOUD

Transmutation [Cold]
Level: Clr 4, Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Area: One 20-ft. square/level
Duration: 1 hour/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

Any fog, haze, or cloud subjected to this spell develops needlelike particles of ice within its substance. Anyone moving through the spell's area suffers 1d8 points of cold damage for every 5 feet of movement. If cast on the substance of a *cloudbank* spell, it has the effect of a *spike stones* spell that causes cold damage. In either case, anything that destroys or moves the fog, haze, or cloud end the *ice cloud* effect.

Arcane Material Component: Sliver of glass.

RETURN TO THE SADDLE

Transmutation [Teleportation]
Level: Brd 3, Clr 3, Rgr 2, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, F
Casting Time: See text
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: You and carried objects weighing up to 50 lbs./level
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You can cast this spell with a single word. Casting the spell is a free action, like casting a quickened spell, and it counts toward the normal limit of one quickened spell per round.

Casting this spell instantly returns you to the saddle to which it is attuned, provided that saddle is within range. You appear in the correct orientation, ready to ride.

Focus: A leather strap fashioned at the same time as a companion saddle. The strap can be worn or simply carried on the caster's person in order for the spell to function.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Do not assume that appearance dictates intelligence; all creatures have rights.
2. Do not suffer injustice to thrive for any creature, whether scaled, furred, or feathered.
3. Duty before all else; the needs of the organization outweigh the needs of the individual.
4. Respect your equals and superiors; show courtesy to your lessers.
5. Loyalty and devotion are gifts that keep on giving; support your fellow members, and they will support you.

Silver Strike Guild Statistics

Silver Strike Guild (medium): AL LN; 50,000 gp resource limit; Membership 130; Integrated (human 37, half-elf 20, air genasi 18, halfling 10, giant eagle 7, air element pegasus 5, other 3).

Authority Figures: Hasken Maeke, male half-air elemental/half-human Rgr17; Bolt, male air element pegasus Ftr2.

Important Characters: Bolderan the Bugler, male mountain dwarf Brd6; Effie Suresaddle, female halfling Bbn2/Clr3/Rgr5; Garrison Mardor, male human Ftr12; Justin au'Lock, male human Pal3; Liata, female air genasi Drd2; Luntr Hraldsson, male cloud giant Adp9; Ming, female human Brd3; Parthen Maeke, male air genasi Wiz14; Pontius Fileates, male human Ari7; Riiaw, male giant eagle Sor6; Shimmer, female air element pegasus Drd5; Silent Stalker, male half-black dragon/half-human Rgg; Sitheag McBane, female fiendish harpy Sorg; Tierlane Pasquale, male half-elf Brd13; Tolden Maeke, male air genasi Rgr12; Vas, female human Brd3; Vellia Maeke, female air genasi Clr15; White Orchid, female air genasi Rg4.

Others: Integrated; Rgr6 (4), Rgr1 (40), Drd1 (24), Sor3 (2), Sor1 (19), Brd1 (9), Rg2 (2), Rg1 (5), Adp4 (1), Adp2 (2), Adp1 (2).

JOINING THE SILVER STRIKE GUILD

The first step in joining the Silver Strike Guild is making an appearance at the guild office. Prospective recruits are evaluated on riding ability, combat prowess, the ability to work as part of a team, and general compatibility with those mounts that are available. Applicants with their own mounts are given first consideration for membership, but both the rider and mount are evaluated separately—it is not unknown for a mount to be accepted and its rider denied entrance to the guild membership. In such a case, the guild "purchases" the mount from its owner; while Silver Strike Guild does not believe in the legitimacy of the ownership, they realize many people simply do not know any better.

Despite this preference for members who already have mounts, plenty of new recruits include individuals who believe in the ideas of the Silver Strike Guild but who have not yet had a chance to befriend a flying creature. The same is true of those flying creatures who have not yet bonded closely enough with a member of another species to accept them as a rider. In both cases, promising members are accepted, and the guild works diligently on their behalf to pair rider and mount together.

If accepted, a one-time entrance fee of 5,000 gp and yearly dues of 500 gp must be paid. This ensures that a new recruit is not taking advantage of the specialized training with no intention of serving the guild. If an applicant cannot afford the entrance fee or dues, she may work toward paying them by performing small guild jobs without the benefit of official guild status. Typical assignments are message delivery, caravan guard duty, the hunting down of a member who has turned against the guild, or a simple trip to fetch exotic feed or spell components.

All Silver Strikers are expected to follow the Code of Conduct to the best of their ability, and to obey their superiors. Any that cannot or will not do so are stripped of their benefits and declared an enemy of the guild. If the former member's mount is not of a like mind, the guild makes an effort to liberate the "hostage," using extreme force if necessary.

The last tenet of the Code of Conduct is enforced through a variant *mark of justice*. The silver lightning bolt that represents the spell identifies all members. The tenet of the mark is simple—do not knowingly harm another member of the Silver Strike Guild. Since mounts are classified as guild members, abuse or neglect of one's mount will trigger the *mark of justice*.

Training is provided for members in all areas relating to riding and mounted combat. While mounts cooperate for training sessions, they have an equal voice when it comes to choosing a rider for assignments; if it cannot otherwise communicate its opinion, a *speak with animals* or *tongues* spell is used to ensure the mount and rider accept each other.

All members have salvage rights for any job, and they can expect free room and board from the nearest guild office, if such is available. Cure, *raise dead*, or *resurrection* spells are likewise provided to those members injured or killed while on a job, but again, only where there is someone to provide such services. If a member can no longer perform his or her duties due to a permanent injury, that member is retired and receives a monthly stipend of 100 gp. Irrecoverable members have their retirement stipend sent to kinfolk or put back into the guild fund.

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MONSTERS IN THE

by James Jacobs · illustrated by Cara Mitten

When one hears the cries of "Stop! Thief!" in a busy city marketplace, the image of the thief that comes to mind might vary wildly, be it a dirty urchin, a shifty con artist, a shadowy cutpurse, or a brutish thug. Yet despite this range, the thief is often imagined to be, at the very least, humanoid. However, in cities where streetlights are enchanted by wizards to perpetually burn, where merchants arrive at marketplace on flying carpets and carry the entire stock of their stores in magical bags, and where priests have the power to heal the sick and wound at a touch, the nature of the thief can be just as wild.

This article examines four such creatures. While the creatures themselves have a wide range of shapes and powers, they have commonalties. They are all obviously inhuman, strange, and sometimes terrifying monsters, and yet, oddly enough, their behavior is all too human. These four creatures subsist on thievery and deception, and their favorite prey just happens to be you.

So next time you're wandering through a crowded marketplace and you hear the cries of "Stop! Thief!" be on the lookout not simply for a shifty beggar or a roof-leaping acrobat. Be on the lookout for anything—of any shape and size, because there are monsters lurking in the alleys!

DWEOMERVORE

Small Dragon
Hit Dice: 6d12+12 (51 hp)
Initiative: +7 (Dex)
Speed: 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
AC: 23 (+1 size, +7 Dex, +5 natural), touch 18, flat-footed 16
Attacks: Tail +14 melee and 2 wing slashes +2 melee and bite +2 melee
Damage: Tail 1d6, wing slash 1d4, bite 1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Breath weapon, tail barbs, spell-like abilities
Special Qualities: Magic drain, dragon traits
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +12, Will +5
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 24, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 22
Skills: Concentration +8, Hide +13, Move Silently +16, Pick Pocket +16, Spellcraft +9, Spot +9, Use Magic Device +21
Feats: Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Finesse (tail)

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, pair, or gang (3-7)
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: Standard, double charged magical items
Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral
Advancement: By character class

The small size of the dweomervore is one of its greatest defenses. Adventurers who manage to spot a lurking dweomervore are prone to underestimating the threat it poses until the tenacious dragon strikes—and by that point it is usually too late.

A dweomervore measures about 3 feet long, with most of that length comprising the tail. A dweomervore's tail is a muscular, prehensile member studded with hooks and bony barbs. The creature also has a pair of batlike wings and two small and dextrous arms ending in humanoid claws. The creature's neck is short, and its head is bony and covered with ridges. The creature's jaws are filled with tiny, sharp teeth, and its large amber eyes sparkle with intelligence. A dweomervore's scales are pale blue, and its claws and the hooks on its tail are jet black.

Dweomervores speak Common, Auran, and Draconic, but since they can use *tongues* as a spell-like ability at will, they rarely have difficulty communicating. These creatures are phenomenally long-lived, and they can reach ages of 500 years or more if they're careful.

Combat

Those dweomervores who do not run thieves' guilds enjoy flying invisibly over ruins or other regions often frequented by adventurers. A brazen dweomervore might even lurk in a public place like a tavern, waiting for a chance to strike. When it spies a group of adventurers, it watches them silently for some time so it can determine which members of the party keep wands and other charged items. It then attempts to steal as many of these items as possible using its breath weapon from a place of hiding; if

ALLEY

it is discovered, the creature uses any stolen items against their owners before closing in to constrict with its tail attack. Once it has a victim in its clutches, it uses the violent thrust version of its breath weapon to keep others at bay. Dweomervores are usually more interested in stealing magic than killing, but if they're hard pressed they will use all of their abilities to defend themselves.

Breath Weapon (Su): A dweomervore has a unique telekinetic breath weapon that it utilizes in one of two ways. No matter which use it employs, it may only use its breath weapon once every 1d4 rounds.

The dweomervore can project a blast of telekinetic force from its mouth in a 90-foot long cone; the blast manifests as waves of shimmering force. This wave of telekinetic force can hurl up to six Medium-size creatures or objects away from the dweomervore with great violence. One Large creature counts as two Medium-size creatures, while each Small or smaller creature counts as only half a Medium-size creature. This blast cannot affect creatures of Huge or larger size. All creatures targeted can resist the telekinetic blast by making a successful Will save (DC 15). Creatures hurled in this manner are pushed back in a straight line from the dweomervore to the limit of the cone's range, and each takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage per 10 feet it is hurled. The dweomervore can use this weapon to hurl objects or even weapons at targets in range as well; to do this, it makes a ranged attack roll to strike a target. A creature struck by a hurled weapon takes normal damage for that weapon type. A Small object deals 1d6 points of damage on a hit, a Medium-size object deals 2d6 points of damage, and a Large object deals 4d6 points of damage when it hits.

Alternatively, the dweomervore can choose to focus its breath weapon toward itself. This attack is much more subtle, and is invisible to the naked eye. It allows the dweomervore to exert force on a single Tiny or smaller object, drawing it quickly toward it to be caught gently in its mouth. Unattended nonmagical objects receive no saving throw against this attack, but attended or magical objects gain a Will save (DC 15) to resist. The dweomervore can manipulate objects in this manner with amazing grace, and if it wishes to take an object from a person without being detected it can make a Pick Pockets check to do so. Dweomervores are fond of stealing

These four creatures subsist on deception, and you're their favorite prey.

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

The majority of monsters your party encounters are little more than that—encounters. The four monsters detailed in this article, though, are different. Not only do they each have a unique set of special abilities, but they also have a large number of skills that monsters are not normally known to specialize in. While this can make for some interesting encounter possibilities, they can also make for powerful allies for your characters.

With your Dungeon Master's permission, you can summon some of these creatures using various forms of the *summon monster* spell. Only the trap haunt cannot be summoned in this manner, since these undead are bound to specific locations and cannot exist far outside of their prisons. Don't forget to apply the appropriate template to your summoned monsters!

Summon Monster III (Celestial Wilora): The wilora has perhaps the most versatile set of skills of any of the monsters detailed in this article; you can have your summoned wilora forge documents, read the lips of a target across a noisy room, or aid in preparing disguises for a clandestine operation.

Summon Monster IV (Fiendish Splinterwaif): A summoned splinterwaif can work wonders at slowing pursuing enemies by using its bramble mastery on nearby wooden surfaces. If you're fond of using summoned monsters to flank enemies, the splinterwaif is a natural choice since it also has the sneak attack ability.

Summon Monster VII (Celestial Dweomervore): A summoned dweomervore can be ordered to invisibly infiltrate a room full of yuan-ti to steal an important document or key, or it can be commanded to use any of its useful spell-like abilities on you or your fellow party members.

Any of these three creatures would also make an excellent cohort for a higher level rogue with the Leadership feat. You could even play one of these creatures as a character if the DM allows higher powered races in her campaign. The level adjustments for the creatures are shown below.

Creature	Level Adjustment
Dweomervore	+4
Splinterwaif	+4
Wilora	+2

improperly stowed wands and scrolls from pockets with this ability.

Tail Barbs: The dweomervore's tail is studded with numerous razor sharp barbs. These barbs can inflict terrible wounds. A wound inflicted by the creature's tail continues to bleed at the rate of 1 point of damage per round. The bleeding persists until it is magically healed or staunched with a successful Heal check (DC 15). Multiple hits result in cumulative bleeding damage.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*blur, cat's grace, color spray, daze, detect magic, identify, invisibility, reduce, see invisible, obscuring mist, tongues.* Caster level 7th; save DC 16 + spell level.

Magic Drain: As a full-round action, a dweomervore may place any charged magical item in its mouth and consume 1d6 charges. Each charge consumed in this manner is drained without activating any of the object's powers, and each charge so drained cures the dweomervore of 5 points of damage. Excess hit points gained in this manner are gained as temporary hit points, and they persist for 1 hour.

Dragon Traits: Dweomervores are immune to *sleep* and *paralysis* effects. They have darkvision (60-foot range) and low-light vision.

Skills: Dweomervores gain a +4 racial bonus to Use Magic Device checks.

Dweomervore Society

Many wizards have tried to secure dweomervores as familiars, but unfortunately the creatures are too independent to submit to such servitude for long. Inevitably, a dweomervore familiar or cohort steals its "master's" wands and other charged items and hightails it out of the region. A rare few dweomervores have been known to offer their services to adventurers in return for payments in wands and the like, but for the most part these monsters would rather take what they like without regard for its owner.

It's far more common to find a dweomervore in a position of power than as a minion or servant. Indeed, they make natural and effective guildmasters for thieves' guilds, and often run such operations solely for the purpose of "gathering" wands, staffs, and other charged items from the local populace. A dweomervore guildmaster usually possesses at least a few levels of bard or rogue and generally stays in the background, allowing its humanoid minions to do all the public work. Indeed, most members of a thieves' guild run by a dweomervore never learn the true identity of their guildmaster; the dweomervore trusts its identity only to a select few. As a general rule, dweomervores aren't interested in the daily tasks of running a guild, and they have little loyalty to their minions. If the guild is compromised, the dweomervore is usually the first to escape, often with a large amount of the guild's treasury in its possession.

Dweomervores are fairly intolerant of their own kind, and they tend to view other dweomervores as competition. Two dweomervores that settle within ten miles of each other invariably become drawn into long, often overly destructive feuds that end only when one of them is killed or driven out. Strangely, they seem to enjoy the company of most other dragons, and they can often carry on conversations with their larger kin for years if left unmolested; larger dragons are often fond of the attention, but at the same time know that the longer they keep a dweomervore talking, the better their chances are of hiding or protecting their valuable charged magical items from consumption. The intolerance of their own kind likely stems from the fact that their food (magical item energy) is fairly rare and precious. The only exception to this rule is the bond between a dwemervore and its newborn offspring.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this already unique dragon is its method of reproduction, for dweomervores are asexual. Once a dweomervore reaches the age of 50, it becomes fertile. After this point, it can become pregnant by absorbing all of the charges from a magical item within the span of ten minutes. A pregnant dweomervore quickly becomes introverted and loses interest in everything but sleeping and eating. Luckily, the dweomervore's unique method of conceiving a child allows it to plan its pregnancy with ease. Before conceiving, the dweomervore usually stashes a hidden nest with a large supply of charged magical items to feed on during its pregnancy. The gestation period is fairly short—only a week. During this time, the dweomervore must consume no less than 5 charges of item energy a day, otherwise the creature's

body absorbs the unborn child and the dweomervore becomes sterile.

After a week of gestation, the dweomervore lays a single egg. A dweomervore egg hatches after another week, and the young dragon that emerges from the egg grows to adulthood just as rapidly. A dweomervore remains very protective of its child until it is fully grown, at which time the creature's natural hatred for others of its kind begins to show. As a result, young dweomervores must leave their parents' nests within a week if they wish to avoid a messy end.

Dweomervore Characters

A dweomervore's favored class is rogue, although the creature's naturally high Charisma allows them to become powerful bards and sorcerers as well.

SPLINTERWAIF

Medium-Size Fey
Hit Dice: 2d6+5 (12 hp)
Initiative: +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 50 ft., climb 50 ft.
AC: 17 (+5 Dex, +2 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 12
Attacks: 2 claws +5 melee or splinterspit +5 ranged
Damage: Claw 1d4, splinterspit 1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Call brambles, splinterspit, sneak attack +2d6, transformation
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/silver, SR 7, camouflage, superior woodland stride
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +5
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills: Balance +7, Bluff +8, Climb +13, Disguise +8, Hide +10, Intuit Direction +5, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Search +9, Spot +7, Tumble +10, Wilderness Lore +7
Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Track, Weapon Finesse (claw)

Climate/Terrain: Temperate plains, hills, or forest
Organization: Solitary or band (2-6)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: 3-6 HD (Medium-size)

Unlike most fey, who are most at home in the wilderness, the sinister splinterwaif lurks in the narrow alleyways and tangled slums of large cities. As long as there are large amounts of old weathered wood in which to hide and a fair amount of young children to catch, transform, and eat, the splinterwaif is happy.

Splinterwaifs are masters of camouflage, and they are rarely seen except by their victims. A splinterwaif moves with shocking speed, clambering up vertical surfaces with ease. The splinterwaif appears superficially like a thin, lithe humanoid with long pointed fingers and a shockingly thin body. The creature's head is humanoid, save that in place of hair it has a forest of razor-sharp wooden spines. The splinterwaif's tongue is overly long, and is also studded with wooden splinters and spines. Its skin is thick like the bark of a tree, and it can change into a multitude of colors. Thorns jut from random locations through the skin, some dropping off while others rapidly grow to replace those that have fallen away.

Splinterwaifs speak Sylvan.

Combat

Splinterwaifs lie in wait in piles of discarded lumber, ramshackle buildings, or decommissioned ships, attacking with surprise and sneak attacks. While they are rather adroit with their claw attacks, their favored attack is to spit a long, thin wooden splinter at a target from hiding. When forced into physical combat, a splinterwaif is somewhat cowardly and tries to escape so it can stalk its prey and attack later on its own terms.

Call Brambles (Su): As a standard action, a splinterwaif can cause a thorny branch to grow out of any non-magical wooden surface within 30 feet. Treat this branch as a Medium-size animated object with a Speed of 0 and the constrict exceptional ability. Splinterwaifs are fond of creating animated brambles to help flank opponents or to hold them immobile for sneak attacks. A splinterwaif may animate and control one bramble at a time, but controlling it is a free action.

Splinterspit (Su): As an attack action, a splinterwaif can spit a splinter of wood at a foe as a ranged-weapon

attack. A spit splinter has a range increment of 30 feet. The act of spitting splinters provokes an attack of opportunity from anything that threatens the splinterwaif. A hiding splinterwaif can attempt to snipe at targets with its splinter spit attack by taking a move action to immediately hide after making a ranged attack. It suffers a -20 circumstance penalty on its Hide check to conceal itself after the shot. As long as the target is within 30 feet and unaware of the splinterwaif's position, it can take full advantage of its sneak attack with this ranged weapon.

They are insane dryads who have survived the harvesting of their trees.

Sneak Attack (Ex): A splinterwaif can sneak attack as a rogue, gaining +2d6 damage on a successful sneak attack.

Transformation (Su): A splinterwaif can transform a dead humanoid or fey into a Medium-size thorny bush at will. This requires one minute of concentration; if the splinterwaif is interrupted during this time, it must begin the transformation again. A transformed body does not radiate magic and is treated as a normal plant. Creatures that have been transformed into plants in this manner cannot be restored to life via *raise dead* or *resurrection*, although *true resurrection*, *miracle*, or *wish* can revive the dead character.

Camouflage (Su): A splinterwaif's skin changes to match its surroundings. This requires a full-round action on the part of the splinterwaif and grants it a +10 circumstance bonus on Hide checks. While camouflaged, the splinterwaif also gains one-half concealment (20% miss chance). As soon as the splinterwaif attacks, it loses these benefits until it takes another full-round action to camouflage again.

Superior Woodland Stride (Su): The splinterwaif can move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at its normal speed without taking damage or suffering other impairment. This includes thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are magically manipulated to impede motion.

Splinterwaif Society

No one is sure where splinterwaifs originally come from, although the most popular theory is that they are little more than insane dryads that somehow managed to survive the harvesting of their chosen trees. It is said the act of harvesting forces the dryad into a state of incorporeal hibernation, during which she transforms and twists into a mockery of her former self. Once her tree is converted to lumber and used to build ships or houses or fences, she awakens and lays claim to the region she has been transplanted into. This theory starts to break down upon close examination. For example, splinterwaifs are as often male as they are female, they don't seem to exhibit any particular symbiotic attachment to anything in their environment, and they are not bound to specific regions. Indeed, splinterwaifs are often unknowingly transported to new cities when they stow away on ships.

A splinterwaif's lair is hard to detect, but one sure sign of splinterwaif activity is a predominance of small thorny shrubs in a vacant lot or lumberyard. These shrubs invariably turn out to be the bodies of people the local splinterwaifs have captured, killed, and transformed. Splinterwaifs are careful to gather these victims from various random locations throughout the city, and they tend to focus on orphans or other children who won't particularly be missed. Often a city's splinterwaif infestation goes unnoticed for months or even years. Splinterwaifs have a singularly horrible reason for transforming the bodies of those they capture and kill: They relish the taste of slain children who have been transformed into dry thorny shrubs. Sometimes splinterwaifs are forced to kill adults. They transform these kills into shrubbery as well, if only to hide the dead bodies. Splinterwaifs find transformed adults to be sour and unpalatable, however, so the shrubs of adult victims tend to build over time and mark a region as one of splinterwaif activity. Curiously, splinterwaifs are loathe to destroy these shrubs, and once they become too dense or obviously denote an area as a splinterwaif lair, the creatures move on to a new home rather than destroy the shrubs.

TRAP HAUNT

A trap haunt is the undead remnant of a particularly headstrong rogue who was slain by a trap. Like most ghosts, a trap haunt is bound to the site of its death—in this case, the very trap that created it.

The actual trap haunt appears as a cold pale vapor that writhes and roils over the surface of the trap. Those who look closely at this mist can see that it is composed of dozens of insubstantial images of the original victim's face, twisted into a seething mask of rage and hatred. When at rest or waiting in ambush, the trap haunt is often invisible to the naked eye.

Unlike most ghosts, the trap haunt remembers little of its previous life, save that it was cut short by the unfortunate accident with the trap that killed it. A trap haunt wants only to lure the living to it so it can use the trap to kill and feed on the souls of the dying victims in a hopeless and tragic attempt to free itself from the numbing humiliation of its ignominious death. Trap haunts do not act in an organized or intelligent manner as a general rule.

In some circles, these unique undead creatures have come to be known as "trapparitions." Although the name itself might be a bit too comical for a creature steeped in such a legacy of pain and suffering, it seems to be catching on in areas with a well-developed sense of black humor.

Trap haunts are sometimes purposely created by an especially evil and cruel individual who seeks to further protect a trap-filled lair. Often, such an individual invites a rogue into her lair with the promise of riches and power in return for simply testing her newest security devices. Typically, the lair contains numerous minor and obvious traps, to lure the rogue into a false sense of security. Once the rogue's guard is down, the real trap is sprung. Creating trap haunts in this manner is time consuming—only the most charismatic of victims can become trap haunts. Those who do are well worth the trouble.

A trap haunt can be moved to a new location once it is created, although this is a dangerous process that requires

magical means or clerical assistance to control the undead. Once the undead spirit is quelled, the trap itself must be physically transported to its new location. Despite the logistics involved, rumors on the black market tell of several thieves' guilds that make tidy profits harvesting trap haunts and selling the haunted devices to evil warlords and crazed magicians.

Creating a Trap haunt

"Trap haunt" is a template that can be added to any living creature that possesses at least 1 level of rogue and has been slain by a trap. The creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature") must have a Charisma score of at least 18. The base creature's type changes to undead, and it gains the incorporeal subtype. It otherwise uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12.

Speed: A trap haunt has a fly speed of 30 feet with perfect maneuverability. It loses all other movement rates.

AC: The trap haunt's natural armor value is +0, but it gains a deflection bonus to its AC equal to its Charisma bonus.

Attacks: The trap haunt retains all of the attacks of the base creature, but these attacks become incorporeal touch attacks. These attacks are modified by the trap haunt's Dexterity score, not its Strength score. Note that trap haunts cannot use equipment.

Damage: The trap haunts incorporeal touch attacks cause 1d6 points of cold damage plus additional cold damage equal to the trap haunt's Charisma bonus.

Special Attacks: The trap haunt retains all the special attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect corporeal creatures. In addition, the trap haunt gains the following special attacks.

Animate Dead (Su): As a full-round action, the trap haunt may transform the remains of any creature slain by it or its trap into a skeleton or zombie of the appropriate size. Once the undead is animated, the trap haunt may control the actions of the undead minion as a free action. These animated undead cannot move more than 30 feet from the area the trap affects, regardless of who controls them.

Animate Trap (Su): As a full-round action, the trap haunt may animate the trap that slew it, either triggering or resetting the trap.

Chill Aura (Su): Any living creature within 30 feet of a trap haunt must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the trap haunt's HD + Charisma modifier) each round or take 1d6 points of cold damage. A trap haunt may suspend or resume the use of this ability as a standard action. When the chill aura ability is not in use, a trap haunt is invisible as per the spell *improved invisibility.*

Energy Drain (Su): Any living creature struck by a trap haunt gains 1 negative level. For each negative level bestowed, the trap haunt heals 5 points of damage. If the amount of healing is more than the damage the trap haunt has taken, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. If the negative level has not been removed (with a spell such as *restoration*) before 24 hours have passed, the afflicted opponent must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the trap haunt's HD + Charisma modifier) to remove it. Failure means the opponent's level (or HD) is reduced by 1.

Special Qualities: The trap haunt has all the special qualities of the base creature and those listed below.

Bonded Trap (Su): Trap haunts cannot move more than 30 feet from the trap that created them, but as long as the trap that created the trap haunt exists, the undead spirit cannot be slain. If reduced to 0 hit points, the trap haunt merely fades away for 2d6 rounds before returning at full strength. As long as the trap haunt has at least 1 hit point, its trap's hardness is increased by a number equal to the trap haunt's Charisma bonus. If the trap is destroyed, the trap haunt continues to inhabit the ruined remains but can no longer animate the trap. If the trap haunt is then brought down to 0 hit points, it is permanently slain.

Invisibility (Su): When the trap haunt is not using its chill aura ability, it is invisible as per the spell *improved invisibility. True seeing, invisibility purge, see*

SAMPLE TRAP HAUNT

This example uses a 6th-level human rogue as the base creature.

Human Rogue Trap Haunt
Medium-Size Undead (Incorporeal)
Hit Dice: 6d12 (39 hp)
Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: Fly 30 ft. (perfect)
AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 deflection), touch 18, flat-footed 18
Attacks: Incorporeal touch +7 melee
Damage: Incorporeal touch 1d6+5 cold
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Animate dead, animate trap, chill aura, energy drain,
Special Qualities: Bonded trap, evasion, invisibility, +4 turn resistance, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked)
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +2
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 17, Con —, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 20
Skills: Climb +9, Disable Device +5, Innuendo +9, Hide +12, Listen +11, Pick Pockets +12, Open Lock +12, Search +5, Spot +11
Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Climate/Terrain: Any (scything blade trap)
Organization: Solitary plus 1d10 skeletons and 1d10 zombies
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

COMBAT

A scything blade trap in a narrow secret passage took the life of a careless human rogue, and as a trap haunt that rogue now seeks to kill any creature that enters its domain. When a creature approaches the trap, the trap haunt animates the skeletons of former victims to fight the interlopers. When the intruder fights its way to the place the trap affects, the trap haunt causes the trap to attack if the creature did not already do so. The trap haunt then activates its chill aura and enters the fray. The saving throw DCs for this trap haunt's chill aura and level drain attacks is 18. For a full description of the trap haunt's abilities, see the trap haunt template.

invisibility, and similar spells reveal the presence and location of the trap haunt normally.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A trap haunt has +4 turn resistance.

Abilities: Same as the base creature, except that the trap haunt's Intelligence becomes 3 and it lacks a Constitution score.

Skills: Same as base creature. Note that an undead creature uses Charisma to modify Concentration checks and an incorporeal creature is always completely silent unless it wishes to be heard.

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary plus 1d10 (or more) skeletons and 1d10 (or more) zombies
Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +2
Treasure: Standard. Note that trap haunts are incorporeal creatures with no connection to the Ethereal plane. They cannot use equipment of any kind.
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: Same as base creature

WILORA

Tiny Shapechanger
Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)
Initiative: +9 (Dex, Improved Initaitive)
Speed: 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)
AC: 19 (+2 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 14
Attacks: Claw +0 melee
Damage: Claw 1d4
Face/Reach: 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Hypnotic song, memory-snatching gaze
Special Qualities: Alternate form, resistant to Enchantment spells, SR 12
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +9
Abilities: Str 5, Dex 20, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 21
Skills: Bluff +10, Disguise +10, Forgery +10, Gather Information +10, Innuendo +9, Listen +11, Read Lips +8, Sense Motive +9, Spot +10
Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Climate/Terrain: Any temperate or tropical land
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral
Advancement: 3-6 HD (Small)

The wilora is a cunning and deceptive creature that can steal the memories of those who meet its gaze; it can then assume the form of its victims at will. Wiloras are said to be the creation of a long-forgotten goddess of mischief and chaos, formed from the eggs of tropical birds that have been soaked in the blood of doppelgangers. Indeed, the similarity between the wilora's abilities and the doppelganger's seems more than coincidental.

A wilora spends as much time as possible in alternate forms, but during the day its ability to change shape is suppressed. As a result, most of these creatures are nocturnal in nature. In its true form, a wilora looks like a stork, with long blue legs and a raven-like head with a sharp, straight beak. The creature's plumage is breathtaking, with thin, prismatic feathers cascading down its back. The creature has a magnificent, brightly colored crest and long tail feathers similar to those of a bird of paradise.

Wiloras can speak Common, Auran, and any languages known by the form they take using alternate form.

Combat

A wilora forced into combat in its natural form relies heavily on its hypnotic song, for it is far from a dangerous creature in melee. When forced into melee in its true form, it claws with its talons and hopes for the best. A wilora hides and rests during the day. At night, the wilora takes full advantage of its alternate forms when forced into combat. If it doesn't have access to a humanoid form, a cornered wilora is quick to assume the form of a birdlike beast to fight more effectively.

Hypnotic Song (Su): While in its true form, as a full-round action a wilora can trill a captivating song that affects all living creatures within a 30-foot spread. Such creatures must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 16) or become entranced by the song as if by a *hypnotism* spell cast by a 2nd-level sorcerer. This is a mind-affecting sonic attack. A bard's countersong ability allows a hypnotized creature to attempt a new Will save.

Memory-Snatching Gaze (Su): If a wilora meets the gaze of a helpless or

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willing target (such as a target that has been hypnotized by its song) within 30 feet, the victim must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 16) or his memories and knowledge become accessible to the wilora through an intrusive telepathic link. After the link is established, closing eyes, being blind, or looking away from the wilora's gaze has no effect, but moving more than 30 feet away breaks the link. Each round, the victim may make a new saving throw to break the link, but in each round that the victim fails the saving throw the wilora learns the answer to one question, to the best of the victim's knowledge. These questions are posed telepathically, and the answers are imparted directly to the wilora's mind. Once a victim makes a Will save against the wilora's gaze, he becomes immune to that particular wilora's gaze for 1 day.

Unlike most gaze attacks, this gaze attack requires the wilora's concentration; it cannot target more than one creature in a round. The wilora may only use its memory-snatching gaze while in its true form. It is a mind-affecting attack.

Alternate Form (Su): A wilora is bound to its true form during the day, but after nightfall it gains the ability to *polymorph self* at will as a move-equivalent action into any bird or bird-like animal or beast of Large or smaller (including giant eagles, giant owls, griffons, hippogriffs, or owlbears), remaining in that form until daybreak if it wishes.

In addition, if the wilora has successfully used the memory-snatching gaze during the current night, the wilora may assume the form of the last creature upon which it successfully used its memory-snatching gaze. This function of the ability works like the *polymorph self* spell except the wilora can take the form of any Large or smaller creature allowed by that spell.

Resistant to Enchantment Spells: A wilora gains a +4 racial bonus to all saving throws versus spells and spell effects of the Enchantment school.

Wilora Society

A thieves' guild that can secure the friendship of a wilora has a powerful weapon at its disposal. Wiloras take great delight in causing chaos and mischief, and often agree to work with thieves' guilds simply for the reward of witnessing the confusion caused by their activities. Often, a high-ranking rogue voluntarily submits to a wilora's gaze attack so the wilora can serve as a distraction or a helpful twin for establishing the rogue's alibis. Other times, a wilora is used to steal knowledge from prisoners or important public officials; the creature can assume the form of the desired person and perform any manner of embarrassing and often criminal acts in its borrowed form to tarnish the reputation of its victim. Even without its ability to extract information and change shape, the wilora possesses a number of highly useful skills that complement the standard activities of most thieves' guilds quite nicely. A guild that manages to befriend a wilora is wise to keep its shapechanging ally happy, for many guilds have been destroyed when a dissatisfied wilora stole the memories and form of the guildmaster and publicly exposed her identity.

When not employed by a guild, a wilora usually spends its time flying above large cities in the form of a local type of bird, searching for particularly interesting or intriguing individuals from whom to steal memories. These wiloras are usually only seeking hedonistic or amusing memories, and as such are not much of a threat to society. It's only when their natural voyeuristic tendencies and strange powers are harnessed by those with more sinister motives and goals that the wilora truly becomes a threat.

THE THREAT IS REVEALED.
THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT
WARRIORS OF ALL KINDS GATHER.
ALLIANCES ARE MADE AND BETRAYED.
SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE.
CHOOSE FROM 15 DIFFERENT ARMIES
AND MARCH TO BATTLE.
WILL YOU DARE THE
CONFRONTATION.

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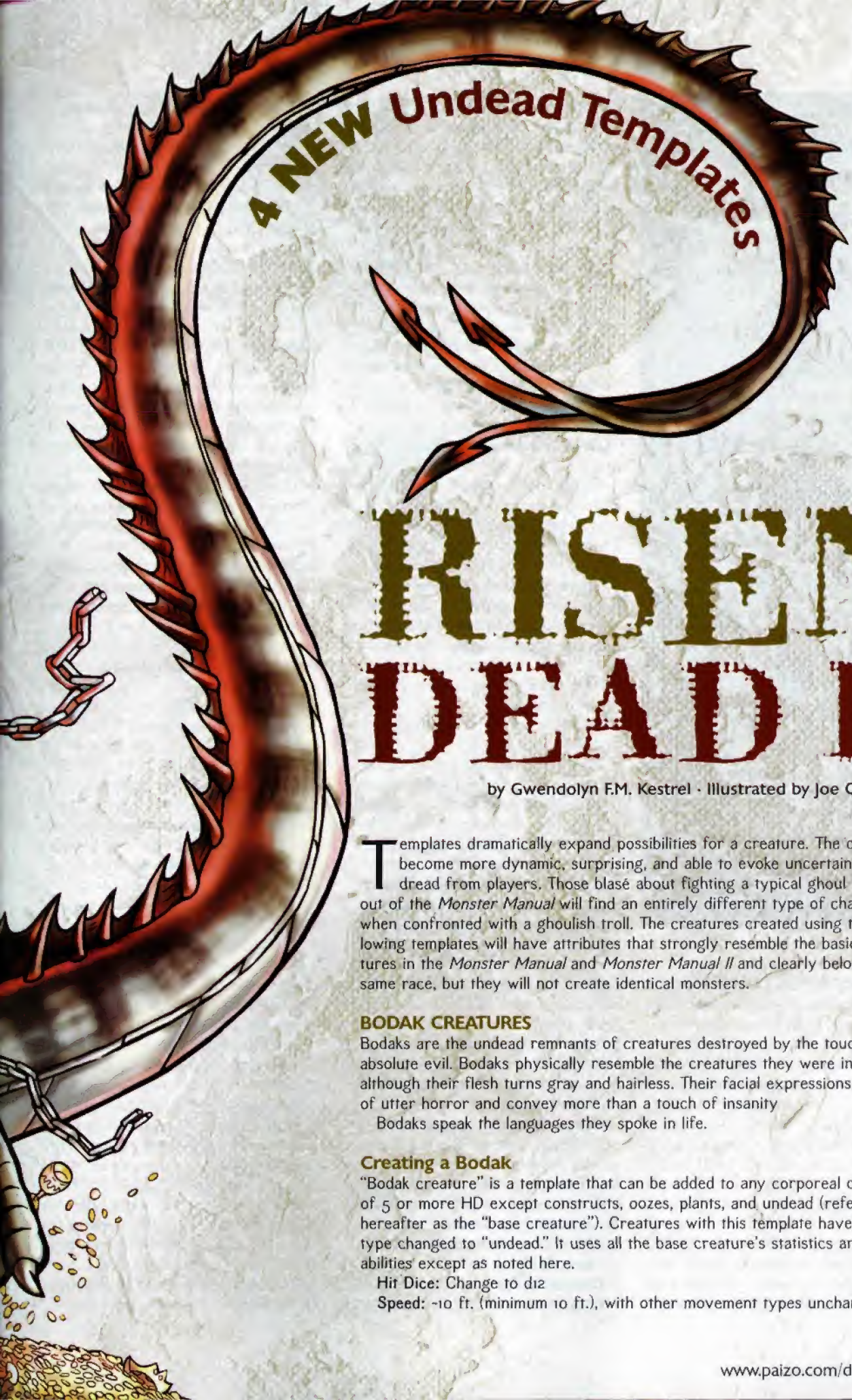

4 NEW Undead Templates

RISEN DEAD II

by Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel · Illustrated by Joe Corroney

Templates dramatically expand possibilities for a creature. The creatures become more dynamic, surprising, and able to evoke uncertainty and dread from players. Those blasé about fighting a typical ghoul straight out of the *Monster Manual* will find an entirely different type of challenge when confronted with a ghoulish troll. The creatures created using the following templates will have attributes that strongly resemble the basic creatures in the *Monster Manual* and *Monster Manual II* and clearly belong to the same race, but they will not create identical monsters.

BODAK CREATURES

Bodaks are the undead remnants of creatures destroyed by the touch of absolute evil. Bodaks physically resemble the creatures they were in life, although their flesh turns gray and hairless. Their facial expressions are looks of utter horror and convey more than a touch of insanity

Bodaks speak the languages they spoke in life.

Creating a Bodak

"Bodak creature" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature of 5 or more HD except constructs, oozes, plants, and undead (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Change to d12

Speed: -10 ft. (minimum 10 ft.), with other movement types unchanged

BODAK FLASHBACKS

If you're creating a bodak NPC of importance, consider the following possibility instead of having a random 5% chance at the start of every encounter that the creature notices something of its former life. Create a list of up to five triggers that will automatically generate the confusing flashback. Draw them from the background of the NPC. Here are some options:

A creature hearing someone speaking the name it had in life.

A bodak seeing a piece of equipment or clothing it owned in life.

A barbarian witnessing someone going into a rage.

A bard hearing someone using a bardic song ability.

A cleric presented with the holy symbol of the deity it worshiped.

A druid seeing someone wild shape.

A fighter witnessing someone use the Cleave feat.

A monk seeing someone use flurry of blows.

A paladin watching someone use *lay on hands.*

A ranger observing someone use Two-Weapon Fighting.

A rogue witnessing someone tumble to avoid an attack of opportunity.

A sorcerer seeing a familiar.

A wizard watching someone cast a spell from a scroll.

Use caution in exercising this option. It can make the fight with the bodak much tougher or easier, depending upon which memory triggers you choose.

AC: The base creature's natural armor increases by +3.

Damage: The base creature's natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. If the base creature does not have a better natural attack, it gains a slam attack that deals damage based on the creature's size:

Size	Damage
Fine	1d2
Diminutive	1d3
Tiny	1d4
Small	1d6
Medium-size	1d8
Large	2d6
Huge	2d8
Gargantuan	4d6
Colossal	4d8

Special Attacks: A bodak retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves for abilities listed below have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the bodak's HD + the bodak's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise in the ability's description.

Death Gaze (Su): Death, range 30 feet, Fortitude negates. Corporeal creatures (except constructs, plants, oozes, and undead) who die from this attack are transformed into bodaks in one day.

Special Qualities: A bodak retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

Damage Reduction (Su): A bodak gains damage reduction 15/silver.

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Bodaks are immune to electricity.

Flashbacks (Ex): From time to time, a bodak sees something that reminds it of its almost-forgotten life. At the start of every encounter, there is a 5% chance that it notices something about an opponent (randomly determined, if more than one opponent is present) that causes it to recall its life. If this happens, the bodak takes no action for 1 round and thereafter suffers a -2 morale penalty to all attacks directed at that opponent.

Resistances (Ex): A bodak gains acid and fire resistance 20.

Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex): Bodaks loathe sunlight, for its merest touch burns their impure flesh. Each round of exposure to the direct rays of the sun deals 1 point of damage to the bodak creature.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A bodak cannot be raised, and *resurrection* works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

Saves: Same as the base creature

Abilities: Increase from base creature as follows: +2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, -4 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, and +2 Charisma. Being undead, a bodak has no Constitution score.

Skills: Same as the base creature

Feats: Same as the base creature

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary or gang (2-4)

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +4

Treasure: Same as the base creature

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: Same as the base creature

Sample Bodak

This example uses a five-headed hydra as the base creature.

Bodak Five-Headed Hydra
Huge Undead
Hit Dice: 5d12 (32 hp)
Initiative: +3 (Dex)
Speed: 10 ft., swim 10 ft.
AC: 20 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +9 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 17
Attacks: 5 bites +5 melee
Damage: Bite 1d10+4
Face/Reach: 20 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:
Special Qualities: Acid resistance 20, DR 15/silver, electricity immunity, fire resistance 20, flashbacks, scent, sunlight vulnerability
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +2
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 16, Con –, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 11
Skills: Listen +6, Spot +7
Feats: Combat Reflexes

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary or gang (2-4)
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: 1/10 coins; 50% goods; 50% items
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: –

Combat

Bodak hydras can attack with all their heads at no penalty, even if they move or charge during the round. Each head can either bite or use its death gaze ability.

A bodak hydra can be killed either by severing all its heads or by slaying its body. To sever a head, an opponent must hit the monster's neck with a slashing weapon and deal damage equal to the hydra's original hit point total, divided by its original number of heads, in one blow. (The player says where the attack is aimed just before making the attack roll.) For example, a single blow dealing 10 or more points of damage severs a head from a five-headed hydra with 52 hp. Any excess damage is lost. A bodak hydra that

loses a head can no longer attack with the severed head but suffers no other penalties. A severed head does not regrow.

Death Gaze (Su): Death, range 30 feet, Fortitude negates (DC 12). Corporeal creatures (except constructs, oozes, plants, and undead) who die from this attack are transformed into bodaks in one day.

Flashbacks (Ex): From time to time, a bodak sees something that reminds it of its almost-forgotten life. At the start of every encounter, there is a 5% chance that it notices something about an opponent (randomly determined, if more than one opponent is present) that causes it to recall its life. If this happens, the bodak takes no action for 1 round and thereafter suffers a -2 morale penalty to all attacks directed at that opponent.

Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex): Bodak hydras loathe sunlight, for its merest touch burns their impure flesh. Each round of exposure to the direct rays of the sun deals 1 point of damage to the creature.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A bodak cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range)

Skills: Hydras receive a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks, thanks to their multiple heads.

Feats: A hydra's Combat Reflexes allows it to use all its heads for attacks of opportunity each round.

GHOULISH CREATURE

Occasionally, a living person chooses a path of ineffable evil through depraved acts including regular cannibalism. Sometimes, these creatures turn into ghoulish versions of their living selves. In appearance, they look much as they did in life, except their skin decays and the outline of their bones becomes evident. Ghouls speak the languages they spoke in life.

Creating a Ghoulish Creature

"Ghoulish creature" is a template that can be added to any giant or monstrous humanoid or a humanoid with 4 or more HD. (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Change to d12

Speed: Same as the base creature

AC: The base creature's natural armor increases by +2.

Damage: The base creature's natural attacks can cause paralysis in addition to their normal damage. The base creature's natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. If the base creature does not have a better natural attack, it gains a bite attack and two claw attacks that deal damage based on the creature's size:

Size	Bite	Claw
Fine	1	–
Diminutive	1d2	–
Tiny	1d3	1
Small	1d4	1d2
Medium-size	1d6	1d3
Large	1d8	1d4
Huge	2d6	1d6
Gargantuan	2d8	1d8
Colossal	4d6	2d6

Special Attacks: A ghoulish creature retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves for abilities listed below have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the ghoul's HD + the ghoul's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise in the ability's description.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature killed by a ghoulish creature rises as a form of ghoul 1d4 days after death. The victim returns as a ghoul if it was a humanoid with 3 or fewer HD and as a ghoulish creature if it was a giant or monstrous humanoid or a humanoid with 4 or more HD.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghoulish creature's natural attack must succeed at a Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

Special Qualities: A ghoul retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A ghoul has +2 turn resistance.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A ghoul cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

Bodaks are undead remnants of people destroyed by absolute evil.

Saves: Same as the base creature

Abilities: Increase from base creature as follows: +2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom, and +6 Charisma. Being undead, a ghoul has no Constitution score.

Skills: Same as the base creature

Feats: Same as the base creature

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary, gang (2-4), or pack (7-12)

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +1

Treasure: Same as the base creature

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: Same as the base creature

Sample Ghoulish Creatures

This example uses a harpy as the base creature.

Ghoulish Harpy

Medium-Size Undead

Hit Dice: 7d12 (45 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

AC: 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13

Attacks: Bite +8 melee, 2 claws +3 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6+1 plus paralysis, or claw 1d3 plus paralysis

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Captivating song, cre-

ate spawn, paralysis
Special Qualities: +2 turn resistance, undead traits
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 19, Con —, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 21
Skills: Bluff +11, Listen +9, Perform (buffoonery, chant, epic, limericks, melody, ode, storytelling) +12, Spot +8
Feats: Dodge, Flyby Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, gang (2-4), or pack (7-12)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

A ghoulish harpy's coal-black eyes clearly reflect its evil soul.

Although a more malignant and wretched creature than the harpy is difficult to imagine, a ghoulish harpy outdoes a living harpy in depravity and sadism. This creature resembles a gray-skinned, evil-faced old human with the lower body, legs, and wings of a birdlike dinosaur. Its hair is tangled, filthy, and crusted with blood. A ghoulish harpy's coal-black eyes clearly reflect its evil soul, as do the wicked talons on its knotty fingers. Ghoulish harpies like to capture and torment prey before finally killing and eating it.

Combat

When a ghoulish harpy engages in battle, it prefers to use Flyby Attack and strike with a potentially paralyzing claw.

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed at a Will save (DC 18) or become utterly captivated. This is a sonic, mind-affecting charm effect. If the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that harpy's song for one day.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, and so on), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but suffers no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature killed by a ghoulish harpy rises as a form of ghoul 1d4 days after death. The victim returns as a ghoul if it was a humanoid with 3 or fewer HD and as a ghoulish creature if it was a giant or monstrous humanoid or a humanoid with 4 or more HD.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a harpy ghoul's claw or bite attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A harpy ghoul is treated as an undead with 9 Hit Dice for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, and bolster attempts.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A ghoul cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range)

Skills: Harpies gain a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

GHASTLY CREATURES

Even more repellent than ghoulish creatures, ghastly creatures reek of the grave. From a distance, they look like ghoulish creatures, but up close in the miasma of stench, there's no mistaking a ghastly monster. Ghastly creatures speak the languages they spoke in life.

Creating a Ghastly Creature

"Ghastly creature" is a template that can be added to any giant or monstrous humanoid or a humanoid with 7 or more HD. (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Change to d12

Speed: Same as the base creature

AC: The base creature's natural armor increases by +2.

Damage: The base creature's natural attacks can cause paralysis in addition to their normal damage. The base creature's natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. If the base creature does not have a better natural attack, it gains a bite attack and two claw attacks that deal damage based on the creature's size:

Size	Bite	Claw
Fine	1d2	—
Diminutive	1d3	1
Tiny	1d4	1d2
Small	1d6	1d3
Medium-size	1d8	1d4
Large	2d6	1d6
Huge	2d8	1d8
Gargantuan	4d6	2d6
Colossal	4d8	2d8

Special Attacks: A ghastly creature retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves for abilities listed below have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the ghoul's HD + the ghast's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise in the ability's description.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature killed by a ghastly creature rises as a form of ghast 1d4 days after death. The victim returns as a ghast if it was a humanoid with 6 or fewer HD and as a ghastly creature if it was a giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid with 7 or more HD.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghastly creature's natural attack must succeed at a Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6+4 minutes. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is sickening. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed at a

Fortitude save or be sickened, suffering a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 1d6+4 minutes. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature, and creatures immune to poison are unaffected by this ability.

Special Qualities: A ghastly creature retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A ghastly creature has +2 turn resistance.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A ghoul cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

Saves: Same as the base creature

Abilities: Increase from base creature as follows: +2 Strength, +4 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom, and +6 Charisma. Being undead, a ghast has no Constitution score.

Skills: Same as the base creature

Feats: Same as the base creature

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary, gang (2-4), or pack (2-4 plus 7-12 ghouls)

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +2

Treasure: Same as the base creature

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: Same as the base creature

Sample Ghastly Creature

This example uses a hill giant as the base creature.

Ghastly Hill Giant

Large Undead
Hit Dice: 12d12 (78 hp)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 20 ft. (hide) base 30 ft.
AC: 22 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural, +3 hide) touch 10, flat-footed 21
Attacks: Huge greatclub +17/+12 melee; or bite +16 melee and 2 claws +11 melee; or rock +8/+3 ranged
Damage: Greatclub 2d6+11, bite 2d6+8, claw 1d6+4, rock 2d6+8
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Create spawn, paralysis, rock throwing, stench
Special Qualities: Rock catching, turn resistance
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +6
Abilities: Str 27, Dex 12, Con –, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 17
Skills: Climb +10, Jump +10, Spot +6
Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, gang (2-4), or pack (2-4 plus 7-12 ghouls)
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

Ghastly hill giants can appall even the most stalwart adventurers. Their formidable strength and size are impressive in their living brethren. As undead they combine this strength with paralyzing claw attacks and a sickening stench and undead immunities making them quite deadly. Ghastly hill giants speak Giant.

These horrors live to bring more creatures into the thrall of Kyuss.

Combat

Ghastly hill giants take pleasure in melee combat. They will occasionally use their massive greatclubs or shattering rocks, but primarily delight in biting and tearing with their claws.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature killed by a ghastly hill giant rises as a form of ghast 1d4 days after death. The victim returns as a ghast if it was a humanoid with 6 or fewer HD and as a ghastly creature if it was a giant or monstrous humanoid or a humanoid with 7 or more HD.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a ghastly hill giant's claw attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 19) or be paralyzed for 1d6+4 minutes. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

Stench (Ex): The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is sickening. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 19) or be sickened, suffering a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 1d6+4 minutes. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from the sickened creature, and creatures immune to poison are unaffected.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A ghastly hill giant is treated as an undead with 14 Hit Dice for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, and bolster attempts.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A ghoul cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

SCION OF KYUSS

Scions of Kyuss are undead creatures created by Kyuss, a powerful evil cleric turned demigod. These creatures have a great hatred of all living things and a great desire to create more spawn in the thrall of Kyuss. Scions of Kyuss resemble well-rotted zombies and ordinary spawn of Kyuss. Unlike these lesser undead, scions are both intelligent and cunning, retaining the skills and abilities they had in life. Scions of Kyuss speak the languages they spoke in life.

Creating a Scion of Kyuss

"Scion of Kyuss" is a template that can be added to any Medium-size or smaller humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant with 9 or more HD, any Large humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant with 13 or more HD, or any Huge or larger humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant (referred to hereafter as the "base

creature"). Creatures with this template have their type changed to "undead." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Change to d12

Speed: Same as base creature

AC: The base creature's natural armor increases by +2.

Damage: The base creature's natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. If the base creature does not have a better natural attack, it gains a slam attack that deals damage based on the creature's size:

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium-size	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: A scion of Kyuss retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those listed below. Saves for abilities listed below have a DC of 10 + 1/2 the scion's HD + the scion's Charisma modifier unless noted otherwise.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature killed by a scion of Kyuss rises as an undead creature 1d4 days after death. The victim returns as a spawn of Kyuss (see *Monster Manual II*)* if it is a giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid that does not qualify for the scion of Kyuss template and as a scion of Kyuss if it does. Other creatures do not rise as undead.

*If you do not have *Monster Manual II*, the creature rises as a standard zombie.

Fear Aura (Su): A scion of Kyuss continuously radiates a fear effect. This ability functions like a *fear* spell (caster level 15th), except that it affects all living creatures within a 40-foot radius. Any creature that makes a successful saving throw against the effect cannot be affected again by the fear aura of that scion of Kyuss for 24 hours.

Implant Worm (Su): Once per round as a free action, a scion of Kyuss can transfer a worm from its own body to that of an opponent. It can do this whenever it hits with a natural attack, but it can also make the transfer by means of a successful melee touch attack or a ranged touch attack, hurling a worm at a foe from a distance of up to 20 feet. See the Scion of Kyuss Worms sidebar for more details.

Worm Expulsion (Su): Once per day as a standard action, a scion of Kyuss can cause a 20-foot burst of worms from its body. Each creature in the area is coated with 2d4 worms. See the Scion of Kyuss Worms sidebar for more details.

Special Qualities: A scion of Kyuss retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those listed below.

Fast Healing (Ex): A scion of Kyuss regains lost hit points at the rate of 5 per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow the scion of Kyuss to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A scion of Kyuss has +4 turn resistance.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A scion of Kyuss cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

Saves: Same as the base creature

Abilities: Increase from base creature as follows: +8 Strength, +2 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, and +6 Charisma. Being undead, a scion of Kyuss lacks a Constitution score.

Skills: Same as the base creature

Feats: Scions of Kyuss gain Alertness and Toughness as bonus feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or brood (3-4 plus 1-4 spawn of Kyuss)

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature +2

Treasure: Same as the base creature

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: By character class

SCION OF KYUSS WORMS

Each worm is a Fine vermin with AC 10 and 1 hit point. It can be killed with normal damage or by the touch of silver. On the scion's next action after contact with a living creature, the worm burrows into its host's flesh (a creature with a natural armor bonus of +5 or higher is immune to this burrowing effect). The worm makes its way toward the host's brain, dealing 1 point of damage per round for 1d4+1 rounds. At the end of that period, it reaches the brain. While the worm is inside a victim, a *remove curse* or *remove disease* effect destroys it, and a *dispel evil* or *neutralize poison* effect delays its progress for 10d6 minutes. A successful Heal check (DC 20) will extract and kill one worm.

Once the worm reaches the brain, it deals 1d2 points of Intelligence damage per round until it either is killed (by *remove curse* or *remove disease*) or slays its host (death occurs at 0 Intelligence). The victim returns as an undead creature as described under the scion of Kyuss's create spawn ability. Newly created spawn are not under the control of their parent, but they usually follow whatever scion of Kyuss created them.

Sample Scion of Kyuss

This example uses an ogre mage as the base creature.

Ogre Mage Scion of Kyuss
Large Undead
Hit Dice: 5d12+3 (35 hp)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)
AC: 18 (-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt), touch 9, flat-footed 18
Attacks: Greatsword +11 melee; slam +11 melee; or longbow +2 ranged
Damage: Greatsword 2d8+13, slam 1d8+13, longbow 1d10
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Create spawn, fear aura, implant worm, spell-like abilities, worm expulsion
Special Qualities: Fast healing 5, flight, regeneration 2, SR 18, +4 turn resistance,
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +4
Abilities: Str 29, Dex 10, Con –, Int 16,

Wis 16, Cha 23
Skills: Concentration +3, Listen +8, Spellcraft +5, Spot +8
Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, pair, or brood (3-4 plus 1-4 spawn of Kyuss)
Challenge Rating: 10
Treasure: Double standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

An ogre mage scion of Kyuss is an intelligent, evil foe. It excels in cruelty and cunning. About 10 feet tall, an ogre mage scion of Kyuss looks like a rotting zombie festooned with worms and maggots. The jet black skin that the creature had in life looks a putrescent gray-green and its dark eyes burn with malevolence. Ogre mage scions of Kyuss speak Giant and Common.

Combat

Ogre mage scions of Kyuss rely on their spell-like abilities, but they will approach close enough to foes to loose their worm expulsion. Like living ogre mages, they make determined enemies for any who cross them.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature killed by a scion of Kyuss rises as an undead creature 1d4 days after death. The victim returns as a spawn of Kyuss (see *Monster Manual II**) if it is a giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid that does not qualify for the scion of Kyuss template and as a scion of Kyuss if it does. Other creatures do not rise as undead.

*If you do not have *Monster Manual II*, the creature rises as a zombie.

Fear Aura (Su): A scion of Kyuss continuously radiates a fear effect. This ability functions like a *fear* spell (caster level 15th), except that it affects all living creatures within a 40-foot radius. Any creature that makes a successful saving throw against the effect cannot be affected again by the fear aura of that scion of Kyuss for 24 hours.

Flight (Su): An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While in gaseous form it can fly at normal speed and has perfect maneuverability.

Implant Worm (Su): Once per round as a free action, a scion of Kyuss can transfer a worm from its own body to that of an opponent. It can do this whenever it hits with a natural attack, but it can also make the transfer by means of a successful melee touch attack or a ranged touch attack, hurling a worm at a foe from a distance of up to 20 feet.

Worm Expulsion (Su): Once per day as a standard action, a scion of Kyuss can cause a 20-foot burst of worms from its body. Each creature in the area is coated with 2d4 worms.

Fast Healing (Ex): A scion of Kyuss regains lost hit points at the rate of 5 per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow the scion of Kyuss to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Regeneration (Ex): 2 hp per round. Fire and acid deal normal damage to an ogre mage. An ogre mage that loses a limb or body part can reattach it by holding the severed member to the stump. Reattachment takes 1 minute. If the head or other vital organ is severed, it must be reattached within 10 minutes or the creature dies. Ogre mages cannot regrow lost body parts.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*darkness* and *invisibility*; 1/day—*charm person*, *cone of cold*, *gaseous form*, *polymorph self*, and *sleep*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 9th-level character (save DC 16 + spell level). The DCs are Charisma based.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A scion of Kyuss has +4 turn resistance.

Undead Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. A scion of Kyuss cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

Like living ogre mages, these scions of Kyuss make determined enemies.

REGENERATION AND FAST HEALING

When a creature has regeneration and fast healing, it benefits from both. Only the types of damage specified by the regeneration description deal normal damage; all other sources of hit point damage deal subdual damage. The creature with both regeneration and fast healing heals a number of points of subdual damage each round equal to what regeneration and fast healing would heal combined. When the creature suffers normal damage due to a type of damage that regeneration leaves it vulnerable to, fast healing heals that damage before healing any subdual damage, and regeneration heals subdual damage normally. In the case of the scion of Kyuss ogre mage, it heals 7 hit points of subdual damage each round, and when it sustains normal damage, it heals 5 hit points of normal damage and 2 hit points of subdual damage each round.

Minions of Kyuss

The evil demigod Kyuss and his minions offer intriguing possibilities for nearly any campaign. Because they are intelligent and capable of spreading their evil in a slow, insidious manner, the minions of Kyuss can infiltrate and dominate all but the most powerful organizations and communities.

Including Kyuss in a campaign also hints at the possibility of a mortal rising to the ranks of the divine. While the tales of Kyuss's rise and the means through which he achieved demigod status might be lost to antiquity, where one can succeed, others can almost certainly follow. Strife between other powerful evil forces and the minions of Kyuss might revolve around another powerful and evil individual's quest to usurp Kyuss's power or follow in his footsteps. Good characters caught between such factions might even find themselves allied with the horrific minions of the demigod.

by Thomas M. Costa · illustrated by Todd Harris

Heroes of Cormyr

Adventuring in the Forest Kingdom

The gods do not grant to us all the shining mantle of the hero. Do what you can, and it will be enough.
—Baerauble, Royal Magician of Cormyr (-116 DR -429 DR)

The Forest Kingdom of Cormyr is one of Faerûn's most prominent kingdoms, filled with sturdy citizenry and a beloved monarchy. The kingdom is perhaps most famous for its recently deceased king, Azoun IV, and its mighty army of soldiers, the Purple Dragons, and War Wizards. One reason for this fame is the professionalism and skill of the Forest Kingdom's soldiers. However, Cormyr is a rich nation with many exceptional people. The Purple Dragons are buttressed by battlepriests and the Royal Scouts. The most senior War Wizards often join the Council of Mages, the nation's magical armorers and key advisors to both the Royal Magician and the Crown. Noble adventurers seek the Crown's favor by freeing its lands from orcs and goblins, all the while maintaining their holdings and estates, and in the Farsea Marshes of Cormyr's frontier, stout humans worship Bright Nydra, Goddess of the Winter Moon, while raising catoblepas and making the Torilian-famous (or perhaps infamous) Death Cheese.

Five new prestige classes are detailed below. In addition to these prestige classes, Cormyr's Purple Dragon knights are detailed in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, the select Purple Dragon Highknights in *Dragon Magazine Annual #5*, and war wizards in *Magic of Faerûn*. DMs might also consider adapting the excellent herald prestige class found in the *Dragon Magazine Annual #5* for use by Cormyr's existing heralds and the Crown's proposed spy network (as noted in the article, "After the Dragon," also in the *Dragon Magazine Annual #5*).

BATTLEPRIEST OF CORMYR

Cormyr's War Wizards might be more famous and respected, but the Forest Kingdom's battlepriests have always been an integral part of the Purple Dragons. Their magic kept the Purple Dragons moving quickly during the Crusade of 1360 DR and during the recent war against the goblin and orc hordes of Nalavara the Red's army.

Most battlepriests of Cormyr are clerics of Helm, Lathander, Selûne, Tempus, Torm, Tymora, or Tyr, although a few multiclassed paladins have also joined the order. The Steel Regent, Princess Alusair, a follower of Torm, is known to consider several Torm-worshiping battlepriests close friends.

Cormyr's battlepriests are fully integrated into the Purple Dragons, sharing rank and quarters with their battle-ready companions, unlike the War Wizards who retain a special status. Consequently, battlepriests are well appreciated by their Purple Dragon comrades, and the War Wizards are always on watch to ensure their unique position with the Crown is never threatened by emerging battlepriests, who they sometimes and quietly deride as spellbeggars. The battlepriests constantly work to bolster their companions with rallying cries to war, healing magics, and the benefits of their wisdom, all the while praying for the peace Cormyr so dearly needs to recover.

THE BATTLEPRIESTS CONSTANTLY WORK TO BOLSTER THEIR COMPANIONS WITH RALLYING CRIES AND MAGIC HEALING.

Battlepriest Class Features

All of the following are class features of the battlepriest of Cormyr.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: Battlepriests are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all types of armor and shields.

Spells Per Day: A battlepriest's training focuses on magic that will aid him in his duties to the Purple Dragons. Thus, when a character gains an odd level of battlepriest, he gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in whatever divine spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of turning undead, for example).

If a character had more than one divine spellcasting class before he became a battlepriest, he must decide to which class he adds each level of battlepriest for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Brew Potion: The Purple Dragons treasure the battlepriests of Cormyr for their devoted brewing of curative potions. This ability grants the battlepriest the Brew Potion feat.

Rally (Ex): A battlepriest not suffering from a fear effect can use this ability as a standard action a number of times per day equal to his battlepriest level. Allies within 60 feet who are suffering from any fear effect and who can hear the battlepriest are allowed an immediate Will save against the fear effect, with a +1 morale bonus per battlepriest level. Success has the same effect as if the ally succeeded at the initial Will save against the fear effect.

Healing Circle (Sp): At 2nd level, the battlepriest can cast *healing circle* once per day as a caster of the battlepriest's character level.

Healing Domain: At 2nd level, a battlepriest gains access to the Healing domain, including its granted power (cast healing spells at +1 caster level).

Inflame (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, by giving a stirring speech for at least 5 minutes, the battlepriest grants those who listen a +1 morale bonus per battlepriest level to Will saves. This effect lasts for 5 minutes after the speech ends, plus 1 minute per level of the battlepriest. The battlepriest gains the benefits of this effect. This ability can be used up to 3 times per day.

Heroes' Feast (Sp): At 4th level, the battlepriest can cast *heroes' feast* once per day as a caster of the battlepriest's character level.

Planning Domain: At 4th level, a battlepriest gains access to the Planning domain (originally from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, see the Reprinted Domains sidebar), including its granted power (free Extend Spell feat).

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

You can use these prestige classes if you don't play in the Forgotten Realms setting or your campaign in the Forgotten Realms doesn't touch upon Cormyr. Think of these possibilities to add these prestige classes to your game:

- One or more of these prestige classes can be associated with another great kingdom from your campaign.
- By changing the alignment requirements of the prestige classes, you could use these prestige classes to create many great villainous NPCs from an evil kingdom.
- These prestige classes might not be associated with any kingdom. Any could be adapted for use by a guild or organization in your game, or they could be unique to specific NPCs.
- The moon drover prestige class could be associated with a different type of monster. For instance, the abilities the prestige class gains in regards to a catoblepas could instead be applied to the basilisk, with the resistance to death effects and the death gaze of the catoblepas instead granting resistance to petrification and the basilisk's gaze.

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Consider these prestige classes even if you don't play in a Forgotten Realms campaign or your Forgotten Realms character is not from Cormyr. By using one of the suggestions provided in the For Your Campaign sidebar, you or your DM can alter any one of these prestige classes to better suit your character or your DM's campaign. Such collaboration can be a great way for you to have a hand in creating the world you play in, and it can help your DM add detail and interest that makes you more excited to play.

Battlepriest of Cormyr

BATTLEPRIEST REQUIREMENTS

HIT DIE D8

To qualify to become a battlepriest of Cormyr, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonevil and nonchaotic.
Base Attack Bonus: +5.
Concentration: 5 ranks.
Diplomacy: 5 ranks.
Heal: 3 ranks.
Feats: Combat Casting, Leadership.
Spells: Ability to cast divine spells and access to at least one of the following spell domains: Nobility, Protection, Strength, or War.

BATTLEPRIEST CLASS SKILLS

The battlepriest of Cormyr class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: –
Dex: Ride.
Con: Concentration.
Int: Craft, Knowledge (religion), Scry, Spellcraft.
Wis: Heal, Sense Motive.
Cha: Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Wilderness Lore.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

BATTLEPRIEST ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells/Day
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Brew Potion, rally	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	*Healing circle*, Healing domain	–
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Inflame	+1 level of existing class
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	*Heroes' feast*, Planning domain	–
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Easy march, frightful presence	+1 level of existing class

Easy March (Su): At 5th level, a battlepriest can enable all allies, including mounts and the battlepriest, within a 20-ft.-radius burst centered on the battlepriest, to hustle (double standard speed) for up to 5 days. Using this ability is a standard action. Allies within the initial burst retain the benefits for the entire duration for so long as they remain on the same plane. Affected allies are fatigued as if they are merely walking and not hustling. In addition, allies may also make any forced march (see Chapter 9: Adventuring in the *Player's Handbook*) at a hustle during the 5 days; the Constitution check for the forced march is only DC 5 + 1 per extra hour. This power may be used once every ten days.

Frightful Presence (Ex): At 5th level, a battlepriest can strike fear into the hearts of foes. Enemies within 30 feet who see the battlepriest kill a foe or render an enemy helpless must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + half the battlepriest's HD + Charisma modifier) or become shaken for 1 minute. Success indicates that the creature is immune to the battlepriest's frightful presence for 1 day.

COUNCIL MAGE OF CORMYR

Cormyr's famous Council of Mages is a group of arcane spellcasters that advises the Crown on matters pertaining to magic and magical threats, crafts many of the Crown's magic defenses and magic items, and hunts down particularly powerful renegade spellcasters.

The Council of Mages had its start sometime around 70 DR, during the beginnings of Cormyr. Suzail and nearby communities were just beginning to establish themselves as a nation. However, constant attacks from all manner of creatures coming out of what is now known as the King's Forest hampered the efforts of Suzail's king, Rhiiman the Glorious. Men-at-arms were not sufficient protection. The nascent Cormyr needed the help of magic

to combat these beasts. Rhiiman ordered Baerauble Etharr, Royal Magician of Cormyr, to assemble all known wizards. Together, the spellcasters devised a plan of attack using only magic and no soldiers at all. Their efforts, which included the destruction of several portals, were successful, and the group of mages became known as the War Wizards. For centuries, the War Wizards' responsibilities and esteem grew.

In 1284 DR, Salember, the Rebel Prince, refused to abdicate the throne of his regency to the rightful king, the young Rhigaerd II. The War Wizards were split. In the end, Salember was slain by Jorunhast, then Royal Magician of Cormyr. However, in slaying a royal, Jorunhast was exiled, and for two decades thereafter, the power of the War Wizards waned. In 1306 DR, Rhigaerd reinstated the post of Royal Magician, naming Vangerdahast. Recognizing the damaged stature of the War Wizards could become a threat to the Forest Kingdom, Vangerdahast reorganized and reinvigorated the War Wizards, splitting the collection of spellcasters into two formally organized groups, the Council of Mages and the War Wizards. The former was made up of elite War Wizards and crafters of magic items, all dedicated to Cormyr and her Crown, while the latter was made up mostly of wizards serving alongside the Purple Dragons.

Most council mages of Cormyr are wizards, although a few sorcerers also join the Council. Very few bards find the authoritarian structure of the Council to their liking.

Today, Caladnei, the current Royal Magician, and her aides are known as the Council of Mages because they rarely fight anything directly other than rogue mages or supremely powerful threats. They are looked up to and feared by the commoners of Cormyr and accorded the utmost respect by Cormyr's War Wizards and nobility.

Council Mage Class Features

All of the following are class features of the council mage.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: A council mage gains no additional proficiency in any weapons or armor.

Spells Per Day: A council mage's training focuses on magic that will aid

Council Mage of Cormyr

COUNCIL MAGE REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a council mage of Cormyr, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonevil and nonchaotic.

Gather Information: 2 ranks.

Knowledge (arcana): 6 ranks.

Scry: 6 ranks.

Spellcraft: 12 ranks.

Feats: Skill Focus (Spellcraft), any metamagic feat, any item creation feat.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 5th-level arcane spells, knowledge of spells from at least five schools.

Special: Membership on Cormyr's Council of Mages through invitation and the willing submission to a blood vow to never do harm to Cormyr or her Crown (in that order).

HIT DIE D4

COUNCIL MAGE CLASS SKILLS

The council mage's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: –

Dex: –

Con: Concentration.

Int: Alchemy, Craft, Knowledge (any), Scry, Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Profession, Sense Motive.

Cha: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

COUNCIL MAGE ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells/Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Cooperative casting, Improved spell acquisition	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus item creation feat	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Focused dispel, *sending* spell	+1 level of existing class

her in her responsibilities to the Crown. Thus, when a character gains a new level of council mage, she gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in whatever arcane spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved familiar powers, for example).

If a character had more than one arcane spellcasting class before she became a council mage, she must decide to which class she adds each level of council mage for purposes of determining spells per day when she adds the new level.

Cooperative Casting (Ex): Due to their close working relationship with one another, 1st-level council mages learn how to empower their spells through teamwork. You and another willing spellcaster can simultaneously cast the same spell (at the same time in the round). You must be adjacent to one another when casting cooperatively. Add +2 to the save DC against cooperatively cast spells and +1 to caster level checks to beat the target's spell resistance (if any). Use the base DC and level check of the better caster.

For each additional caster cooperating with you and casting the same spell simultaneously, the spell's save DC and caster level check both increase by +1. When more than two spellcasters cooperatively cast a spell, each must be adjacent to at least two other casters.

For example, four spellcasters (two wizards, one sorcerer, and one council mage) stand in a circle planning to cast *fireball*. Three of them ready an action to cast *fireball* when the member with the lowest initiative takes her action, also casting *fireball*. The base DC of the Reflex save is equal to the highest individual save DC among the cooperating casters, as determined by their relevant ability scores or other feats (such as Spell Focus), special abilities, or items. In this case, one wizard has Intelligence 18, which ties with a sorcerer's Charisma 18, so the base DC is 17 (10 + 3 for the spell level + 4 for the ability score modifier). The final save DC of the cooperatively cast *fireball* is 17 + 2 + 1 + 1 or 21. Whoever has the highest caster level determines the base caster level check, which gains a +4 modifier.

This ability is similar to the

Noble Adventurer of Cormyr

NOBLE ADVENTURER REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a noble adventurer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Diplomacy: 4 ranks.

Knowledge (nobility and royalty): 4 ranks

Ride: 4 ranks.

Special: Must have equipment and treasure with a value greater than the starting equipment for a PC of their level, as determined by Table 2-24 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Must be literate.

HIT DIE D8

NOBLE ADVENTURER CLASS SKILLS

The noble adventurer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Ride, Use Rope.

Con: –

Int: Appraise, Craft, Forgery, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Search.

Wis: Innuendo, Intimidate, Listen, Profession, Read Lips, Sense Motive, Speak Language, Spot.

Cha: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Perform.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

NOBLE ADVENTURER ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Courtier
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Bonus feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Valiant
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat

Cooperative Spell feat that appeared in *Tome and Blood*, except that it does not require all the spellcasters to have the Cooperative Spell feat or the cooperative casting ability. The benefits provided by spellcasters with the Cooperative Spell feat do not stack with the benefits of cooperative casting.

Improved Spell Acquisition: At each level of advancement in the council mage prestige class, a character gains three (instead of two) spells of her choice of any level she can cast to add to her spellbook. If the character does not use a spellbook, this ability grants no benefit.

Bonus Item Creation Feat: Council mages are the armorers of the Purple Dragons and War Wizards. At 2nd level, council mages may select a bonus item creation feat; she must still meet the prerequisites for gaining the feat.

Focused Dispel (Ex): Council mages must deal with lingering magical effects such as the Helmlands created during the Time of Troubles or even magical traps laid down centuries ago by the Witch-Lords of the Wyvernwater. Over the years, council members have developed more effective dispelling skills. At 3rd level, they may add a +2 bonus on any caster level checks made to dispel magic.

***Sending* Spell:** At 3rd level, a council mage learns the *sending* spell automatically. The council mage learns this spell despite any limit on spells known, but this ability does not supercede any restrictions the character might have as a specialist wizard. If the character uses a spellbook, she may scribe the spell in the spellbook.

NOBLE ADVENTURER

The civilized nations of Amn, Cormyr, Damara, Impiltur, Lantan, Sembia, Silverymoon, Tethyr, and Waterdeep are all known for their aristocratic warriors, the gentlemen and lady adventurers. Noble adventurers are educated, wealthy, and politically influential dilettantes often born into high position. Unlike aristocrats, however, noble adventurers are not necessarily real nobility; they might be wealthy merchants, adventurers who have earned or bought their way into the circles of power, or the scions of the same. With access to the best goods and opportunities, many noble adventurers become formidable individuals.

Most noble adventurers are single-classed or multiclassed aristocrats, with an ample number of bards, experts, fighters, paladins, rangers, rogues, and warriors also represented among the class. These men and women see adventure as a calling, a necessity, a way to prove themselves, or a lark. Some are more civic-minded and use their skills to protect those less privileged. Whatever their initial motivations, however, noble adventurers often wind up living for the thrill of danger.

In Cormyr, independent adventurers are frowned upon. Cormyreans see adventurers as eccentrics, and to them the notion of adventuring for profit or fame is a throwback to more barbarous days. However, a warrior who fights to right wrongs and brings a civilizing influence to others is accepted. Many of these warriors become noble adventurers of unquestionable principles with grace and skill enough to silence critics. Even if they are not all paragons of virtue, noble adventurers conduct themselves with honor, pride, and style, which includes knowledge of social etiquette to serve them in any social or political situation. Indeed, many members of Suzail's famed Society of Stalwart Adventurers, particularly noble-born members, have become noble adventurers. Unfortunately, Cormyrean warriors also tend to be arrogant, talking down to those who they consider less refined or civilized. Oftentimes, this arrogance is unintentional and not meant as an insult.

WHATEVER THEIR INITIAL MOTIVATIONS, HOWEVER, NOBLE ADVENTURERS OFTEN WIND UP LIVING FOR THE THRILL OF DANGER.

Noble Adventurer Class Features

All of the following are class features of the noble adventurer.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: A noble adventurer is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with light armor.

Courtier (Ex): To the versatile and daring noble adventurer, the ways of court come naturally. At 1st level, a noble adventurer gains a +2 insight bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), and Sense Motive checks.

Bonus Feat (Ex): At 2nd level and again at 4th level, a noble adventurer gains a bonus feat of his choice. This feat may be any feat for which the character has met the necessary prerequisites.

Valiant (Ex): Bold, dashing, and resolute, noble adventurers unflinchingly hurl themselves into battle to great acclaim. At 3rd level, a noble adventurer gains a +4 morale bonus on Will saves against fear effects and, if he has the Leadership feat or takes it later, a +2 bonus to his Leadership score.

MOON DROVER

Winters are a particularly harsh season for the humans and animals of the Farsea Marshes. On a midwinter night a millennium ago, legend claims Bright Nydra fell to Faerûn from the trailing lights of the Tears of Selûne in the form of a falling star. She is the winter moon that brings the Marsh Drovers hope and strength as they await the arrival of spring. She claimed to be the daughter of Selûne and Shaundakul and a goddess of hope and renewal. Although this might well have been true long ago, today Bright Nydra is but an aspect of Selûne, Lady of Silver and goddess of the moon.

The Marsh Drovers of the Farsea Marshes, all of whom are considered "One with the Winter Moon," worship Bright Nydra. She is loved for her wisdom and kindness and venerated as the head of a pantheon that includes Eldath, Lathander, Mielikki, and Chauntea, among others. Clerics of Bright Nydra are identical to the clerics of Selûne, except their favored weapon is the wooden club. Druids of Bright Nydra are identical to druids in the *Player's Handbook*. Most moon drovers are multiclassed human cleric/druids known as Moon Maidens, although some men, known as Moon Guards, also become moon drovers.

Moon drovers spend their days providing counsel and wisdom to the

Moon Drover
of Cormyr

MOON DROVER REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a moon drover, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Patron: Bright Nydra (Selûne)

Alignment: Chaotic good.

Base Fortitude Save: +5.

Base Will Save: +5.

Handle Animal: 3 ranks.

Knowledge (nature): 5 ranks.

Wilderness Lore: 3 ranks.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells and access to at least one of the following domains: Good, Protection, Travel, or Chaos domain.

Special: Must have the ability or power to identify plants and animals with perfect accuracy and tell whether water is safe to drink or dangerous.

HIT DIE D8

MOON DROVER CLASS SKILLS

The moon drover's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: Swim.

Dex: Ride.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Craft, Knowledge (nature), Scry, Spellcraft.

Wis: Intuit Direction, Heal, Listen, Profession, Spot.

Cha: Animal Empathy, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Wilderness Lore.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

MOON DROVER ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells/Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Catoblepas lore, lunar sight	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Resistance to death effects	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Renewal domain	+1 level of existing class

Marsh Drovers. They teach their people how to become one with the catoblepas herds, thus allowing them to milk the magical beasts for the precious liquid they churn into the delectable Death Cheese. They favor bright-colored clothing made from natural fibers, all of which are harvested from the Farsea Marshes.

Moon Drover Class Features

All of the following are class features of the moon drover.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: A moon drover is proficient with all simple weapons. They are proficient with light and medium armors, and they are proficient with shields.

Spells per Day: When a character gains a new level of moon drover, she gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in whatever divine spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling undead, improved wildshape, and so on).

If a character had more than one divine spellcasting class before she became a moon drover, she must decide to which class she adds each level of moon drover for purposes of determining spells per day when she adds the new level.

Catoblepas Lore (Ex): Due to their special affinity for and work with catoblepas, moon drovers may apply their Animal Empathy, Handle Animal, and Knowledge (nature) skills to catoblepas with no penalties, treating them as if they were domesticated animals instead of wild magical beasts. Moreover, moon drovers receive a +2 circumstance bonus on these skill checks when applying them to the catoblepas and a +4 insight bonus on saves against a catoblepas's death glare.

Lunar Sight (Ex): Moon drovers gain low-light vision.

Resistance to Death Effects (Ex): A 2nd-level moon drover gains a +4

bonus to saves against death effects and becomes immune to a catoblepas's death gaze.

Renewal Domain and Spells: At 3rd level, a moon drover gains access to the Renewal domain (originally from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, see the Reprinted Domains sidebar), including its granted power (the ability to regain 1d8 + Charisma modifier in hit points if you fall below 0 hit points 1/day). In addition, the moon drover may pray for and receive any Renewal domain spell as if it were on her divine spell lists.

ROYAL SCOUT OF CORMYR

The Royal Scouts of Cormyr are an elite order of Purple Dragon scouts in service to the Crown. They serve with their fellow Purple Dragons in patrols across the Forest Kingdom and as the Crown's elite messengers. However, the Royal Scouts are more famous for their work roaming alone or in small adventuring parties among the Stonelands and Goblin Marches spying on goblinoid tribes, spotting secret Zhentarim outposts, and disrupting the operations of Cormyr's enemies.

These dogged heroes learn to avoid danger without losing sight of their duty. Stealth and survival skills are critical to the Royal Scouts' success. Consequently, most royal scouts are rangers, although several aristocrats, fighters, and rogues have also become members of the Royal Scouts.

Royal Scouts can be encountered anywhere in the Dragonreach and along the Dragon Coast, but they are most likely to be found in Cormyr proper, especially the Forest Kingdom's frontier lands—the Plains of Tun, the Goblin Marches, and the Stonelands.

Royal Scout Class Features

All of the following are class features of the royal scout of Cormyr.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: A royal scout is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor.

Reliable Messenger (Ex): Royal scouts are the Crown's swiftest and most dependable messengers. This ability grants the Royal Scout a +2 bonus on all Innuendo and Ride checks.

Pride of Purpose (Ex): The Royal Scouts are so committed to Cormyr that at 2nd level they gain a +2 bonus on Will saves against fear (magical or otherwise) and other mind-affecting spells and effects.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): As the rogue ability (see Chapter 3: Classes in the *Player's Handbook*). At 2nd level, the royal scout does not lose her Dexterity bonus to AC from being flat-footed. At 4th level, opponents do not gain any attack bonuses for flanking the royal scout.

If the character already had uncanny dodge from one or more previous classes, levels of those classes stack with royal scout levels for the purpose of determining the benefits, but the scout continues to progress in the ability along whichever track she was originally using for the ability. For example, if a rogue becomes a royal scout, add together her levels of royal scout and rogue, then refer to Table 3-15: the Rogue in the

REPRINTED DOMAINS

Planning Domain
Granted Power: Free Extend Spell feat.

Planning Domain Spells
1. *Deathwatch*
2. *Augury*
3. *Clairaudience/clairvoyance*
4. *Status*
5. *Detect scrying*
6. *Heroes' feast*
7. *Greater scrying*
8. *Discern location*
9. *Time stop*

Renewal Domain
Granted Power: If you fall below 0 hit points, you regain a number of hit points equal to 1d8 + your Charisma modifier. This supernatural ability functions once per day. If an attack brings you to -10 hit points or less, you die before this power takes effect.

Renewal Domain Spells
1. *Charm person*
2. *Lesser restoration*
3. *Remove disease*
4. *Reincarnate*
5. *Atonement*
6. *Heroes' feast*
7. *Greater restoration*
8. *Polymorph any object*
9. *Freedom*

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Royal Scout of Cormyr

ROYAL SCOUT REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Royal Scout of Cormyr, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any nonevil and nonchaotic.
Base Attack Bonus: +5.
Hide: 3 ranks.
Innuendo: 1 rank.
Intuit Direction: 1 ranks.
Move Silently: 3 ranks.
Ride: 5 ranks.
Spot: 3 rank.
Wilderness Lore: 5 ranks.
Feats: Alertness, Track.
Special: Membership in the Purple Dragons. Must be literate.

HIT DIE D8

ROYAL SCOUT CLASS SKILLS

The royal scout's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.
Dex: Hide, Move Silently, Ride, Tumble, Use Rope.
Con: –
Int: Craft, Knowledge (nature), Search.
Wis: Heal, Intuit Direction, Innuendo, Listen, Profession, Spot.
Cha: Animal Empathy, Handle Animal, Wilderness Lore.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

ROYAL SCOUT ADVANCEMENT

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Reliable messenger
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Pride of purpose, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus)
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Forester
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Evasion, uncanny dodge (can't be flanked)
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Voices of the Wolf Woods

Player's Handbook to determine the benefits of uncanny dodge at his new combined level.

Forester (Ex): Royal scouts are constantly afield, patrolling Cormyr's frontier and learning the ways of the land. This ability grants the royal scout a +2 bonus on all Heal and Wilderness Lore checks.

Evasion (Ex): At 4th level, a royal scout gains evasion. If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage (such as a *fireball*), she takes no damage with a successful saving throw. Evasion can only be used if the royal scout is wearing light armor or no armor.

Voices of the Wolf Woods (Su): In days of yore, when Cormyr was still in the mighty talons of dragons and the delicate hands of and elves, the great forest that covered the Forest Country was known as the Wolf Woods. Although the dragons and elves are mostly gone from the land, they have left their mark on the land they loved.

At 5th level, a royal scout of Cormyr, having traveled the breadth of Cormyr, has become attuned to some of the place magic of Cormyr and gains the power to *detect evil* (as the spell) at will. In addition, the scout gains the power to sense evil that enters the Forest Kingdom's borders (not those already within its borders). This power detects evil outsiders of at least CR 5, evil elementals and undead of at least CR 10, and other evil beings of at least CR 15 who plan to do harm to the land or people of Cormyr. The power does not give the scout the exact location of the evil, but with successful Intuit Direction checks (DC 15), the scout can make his way toward the creature or creatures, whereupon he gains a +10 insight bonus on all Wilderness Lore checks to track the evil down.

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THE HAUNTED BRIDGE

by Ed Greenwood · illustrated by David Day

North of Westbridge and south of Triboar, a wide stone bridge carries the Long Road across a sucking bog centered around the wandering waters of the stream known as Huntinghorn Water. The bridge stands in isolated, bugbear-populated terrain and for years has been known to mapmakers as "Ilikur's Bridge," To those in the north, however, it is simply called the "Haunted Bridge."

This latter nickname derives from an eerie property of the structure: From time to time, the stones of the bridge speak. Their utterances are loud, clear, and always delivered in the same calm male-pitched voice.

What Meets the Eye

Ilikur's Bridge is built of tightly fitted irregular blocks of local granite that rise in a gentle arch about four feet at its center from the level of the road at its ends. A huge slab of rock resting atop two gigantic stones bridges the Black Maw Bog and carries the road atop its back. This cross-slab is 100 feet in length, half that in width, and 12 feet thick. The two leg blocks are 40 feet tall (with the bottom 10 feet buried in the soil), sixty feet across (east-west), and over 20 feet wide (north-south). Behind each leg block is a wall of fitted stone filled with rubble that carries the road up and down from the height above the cross-slab.

Gravel and river rock have been built up over the cross-slab to make a smooth roadbed, and then finished with cobblestones. The bridge's road runs for 300 feet and is 40 feet wide at all points, allowing the largest laden wagons to pass each other with ease.

On either side of the cobbled roadbed, high walls of dressed and fitted stone topped by sloped, smooth capstone rails protect users of the bridge from accidental plunges over its sides.

The nowforgotten builders of the bridge—who might or might not have had anything to do with Ilikur, whoever or whatever "Ilikur" was—were either dwarves or persons whose stonemasonry skills equaled that of the dwarves of elder times. Although no visible drains pierce the sides or bed of the bridge, the builders chose the type and arrangement of stones so carefully that water seeps through the structure, drains away, and leaves the bridge unharmed by the ravages of winter ice.

The Haunted Bridge is known to have stood at this site, without recorded repairs, for at least eight hundred years and probably for at least a century or two before that, given that its earliest mention in journals and guides all describe it as "old". It might well precede the Long Road by many years, and perhaps once had a purely local use—in a settled land now long vanished beneath the ravages of the northern wilds and weather.

The Black Maw Bog has moved and grown in size over the years, expanding to the east at least as far as a person standing at the height of Ilikur's Bridge can see. Overlain by the wide, slow-moving waters of the Huntinghorn, the Bog is hard to see. Over the years it has swallowed many reckless or ignorant travelers—and their beasts and wagons, too. The Bog consists of thick mud at least 20 feet deep in most places (and almost twice that beneath the midpoint of the bridge). Crabgrass and many small plants grow atop the bog, hiding its true size.

It's considered bad luck to camp or even tarry upon the bridge, a belief fostered both by its haunted reputation and by the practice of several local bugbear raiding bands of attacking all travelers who try to spend the night on the bridge.

What Lurks Unseen

Popular belief refuses to accept reports attesting to the truth about Ilikur's Bridge, but many wizards and sages have investigated the structure thoroughly, and almost all have reported (accurately) that the bridge isn't haunted at all. Instead, it was enspelled with many variant elder versions of *magic mouth* spells that cause it to "speak" under certain conditions (the visible mouths almost all appearing underneath the bridge).

Dozens of the bridge's stone blocks can be removed once the proper "trigger-stones" have been found and manipulated, revealing clever hiding places—one of them a chamber large enough for up to eight humans to hide in. These features are no doubt the source of legends that insist hidden treasure can be found in the vicinity of the bridge. The loaded wagons and coaches of wealthy merchants and nobles sucked into the bog have added to such legends over the years. Most of the sunken wagons and carriages lie to the east of the bridge, from 60 to 100 feet away from it. Some intrepid adventurers using ropes, harnesses, and magic have recovered valuables from inside these coaches, but drownings regularly occur during such attempts.

There are also ancient tales of a dragon that often landed on the bridge and then just as suddenly vanished, and a ring of glowing wizards seen standing in solemn meeting on the bridge by night, but if any of these sightings actually occurred, they've left no mark.

Legends say that death will swiftly strike down anyone who tries to shatter or carry off stones of Ilikur's Bridge—such as the treasure seekers who once dug away at the roadbed at the center of the bridge's span and uncovered a smooth-carved stone giant lying on its back. According to the tales, the stone golem sat up and blasted those who uncovered it with lightning bolts, cooking them alive and hurling them far from the bridge. It then collected all the disturbed stones, laid itself down, and reburied itself, waiting for some momentous occasion before rising again. What this occasion is has caused great debate, and no one can say for sure.

What the Stones Say

Here are some of the recorded utterances of the bridge, along with their known "trigger" conditions. These have been determined by experimentation; the bridge says many other things when conditions that have not yet been precisely defined occur. Even Elminster won't venture an opinion on the meanings of any of these sayings.

- When three or more elves are on or touching any part of the bridge at the same time and no goblinkin (orcs, goblins, hobgoblins, half-orcs, and so on) are within 10 feet of any part of the bridge: "Seek Elrodel in the hidden place, where waits the Crown of Winds for the one worthy to rule."
- When a lone walking creature reaches the midpoint of the bridge: "Be changed, for there are always too few to do the great deeds that are needful."
- When any creature flies within sixty feet of any part of the bridge: "Strike not the work that pleased Ilikur."
- When any flying creature lands on or strikes any part of the bridge: "The dead watch, and mark what you do."
- When any object or carrion (but not undead) strikes any part of the bridge: "To the earth, all returns—but not unheeded."
- When any dwarf touches any part of the bridge: "Built in pride, rooted in power, six stones here point the way to anvils made to forge great magic but hidden elsewhere. Dismantle and destroy not, or suffer Baraurin's curse."
- When any flame or light is kindled or taken onto the bridge: "Beware! Foolishness is seen even here, and responses prepared!"
- When any spell that reveals or analyzes magic is cast on any part of the bridge: "That is not the way. Awaken deeper power at peril."
- When any magic weapon is drawn or any magical power of an item is awakened by a being in contact with any part of the bridge: "The hammer awakens and heeds. Seek it in the old place."

The Black Maw Bog

The Black Maw Bog is a serious danger that has killed many unsuspecting travelers and adventure seekers. It has varying depths but is 30 feet deep at its deepest point. If a creature suspects the bog is there or is especially alert for quicksand, poor footing, or a possible trap, a Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) enables the creature to feel or notice the edge of the bog and move freely to avoid it.

At the shallow edges of the bog (no more than 5 feet from the edge), creatures unable to levitate, fly, or otherwise free themselves from the mud sink until hip- or chest-deep, reducing their speed to 5 feet and giving them a -2 penalty on attack rolls and AC. Brush thrown atop the mud can support creatures able to climb on top of it. Creatures large enough to walk on the bottom can wade through the area at a speed of 5 feet. Creatures can also be pulled free of the mud with a successful Strength check (DC 20).

As creatures reach deeper areas of the bog, it becomes more dangerous, threatening total immersion. A creature over a "bottomless" area of bog sinks hip- or chest-deep with the same effects listed above. After 4 minutes, the creature sinks shoulder-deep, it cannot move, and the penalty on attack rolls and AC rises to -4. After 5 minutes, the creature sinks chin-deep, it is unable to make attacks, the penalty to AC rises to -6, and all spellcasting that requires a somatic component becomes impossible. Total immersion occurs after 6 minutes.

A creature sucked completely under the thick mud of the bog can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to twice its Constitution score. After this period of time, the creature must make a Constitution check (DC 10) every round in order to continue holding its breath. Each round, the DC increases by 1. When the creature finally fails its Constitution check, it begins to drown (see The Drowning Rule in chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

"Bogged" individuals who remain absolutely motionless delay their sinking by 2 minutes. Creatures who plunge or fall into the bog also hasten their sinking by 2 minutes.

Elminster's Notes

Know ye that the tales of vanishing dragons are the result of a two-way portal located at the south end of the bridge. The portal once connected to a dragon's lair but has now either been sealed or destroyed. I've read varying reports that the lair's owner was a large red or black dragon, but I have no idea where the lair is located, nor do I know its contents or if it is currently occupied. When functioning, a creature can make the portal appear by touching the correct two bridge stones—one on the east wall and one on the roadbed—simultaneously.

As for the tale of the golem, there I can be more specific. There is a carved stone figure buried face-up beneath the center of the bridge, but as far as I know, this statue has never been enchanted in any way and was in fact salvaged from a monument that once stood nearby (along with all the other stones of that edifice) to provide stones for the bridge. Dwarves repaired the bridge after the statue was dug up and spread the tale of the statue reburying itself to discourage anyone else from similar excavations. The lightning bolts, however, were real—and there are several more, still-buried stones that yet lie within the bridge, waiting to discharge various deadly electrical spells at those who disturb them. Be warned that some of these stones contain more than a single use of such spells.

There are many things in Faerûn better left undisturbed, and this bridge is one of them. Pass over it, admire it—and leave its stones be. Unless, of course, a swift grave is thy goal.

1
2

THE HAUNTED BRIDGE

1. Touching three stones here in the correct sequence causes a "cold" sensation to occur for 2 minutes. Advancing into the coldness during this time allows entry into an extra-dimensional space similar in all ways to the space created by a *rope trick* spell. The correct stones are marked with tiny crossed swords, but the correct sequence is not recorded. Incorrect sequences of touching "turns off" the stones for unknown periods of time.

2. A road bed cobblestone here bears a deeply-graven mark that looks like a "W" with a "V" beneath it. No one knows the meaning of these markings. The stone has been pried loose and lifted—revealing nothing beneath but layer upon layer of other stones, and gravel.

3. An unmarked stone in the bridge sidewall here pivots if one end is pushed in, to reveal a small storage niche within the thickness of the wall. Sometimes cryptic messages can be found here, scratched on scraps of leather or shards of pottery.

4. At least two legends say a cache of stolen coins and gems is buried somewhere near the north end of the bridge—a certain (but unknown) distance from the end of the east bridge sidewall, in a precise (and also unknown) direction. One tale says guardian undead are buried with the chest of treasure.

REVISION 3.5 UPDATE

by Ed Stark

Well, the clock is ticking down, and we've received quite a bit of feedback on earlier "Revision Update" articles. Thanks very much for the suggestions, and know that this month we're dealing with a subject apparently near and dear to many of your hearts: Changes to spells.

As always, we want to provide you with a few specific examples you can actually take away and think about (and maybe even implement) before the 3.5 Revision releases in July. I'll use three "3.0" spells as examples of how we addressed problems in a variety of spells and spell-like abilities and try to use these specific examples to help you get inside the heads of the designers and understand why we made the changes we did. As always, please remember that while we're working on this article, the books are not final and any preview material printed here is subject to change.

CLEANING UP

When Jonathan Tweet, Skip Williams, and Monte Cook (along with Rich Baker, Peter Adkison, and the rest of the RPG R&D staff) overhauled the D&D game system, they wanted to make the game intuitive to play. That meant cutting out a lot of the extraneous or convoluted subsystems. (Remember the old "Thieving Skills" system or the different XP tables for every class?) Unfortunately, one area of the game is rife with necessary subsystems, and that's magic—magic spells and magic items often have to have their own rules to work in the roleplaying game.

That isn't to say they didn't try to streamline and quantify, but how do you quantify a *wish* without stripping out most of the spell's interesting flavor? So some spells stayed "arcane" in their descriptions and, unfortunately, implementation. They took the development of spells and magic pretty far—we hope 3.5 keeps heading in the same direction, and we've taken steps to see that it happens.

This month, we'll talk about four spells (well, technically a lot more than that—you'll see) that illustrate how the 3.5 Revision should make the D&D game more fun to play.

THE 3 H'S AND THE BIG P

These spells have caused problems all over the game system, and we've heard from RPGA members (particularly judges and adventure writers), players, DMs, and our own design staff how much game imbalance, frustration, and difficulty they cause. One of the spells has actually undergone three stages of revision and is only now coming into solid shape.

The "three Hs" include *harm, hold person* (and all its brethren), and *haste*. The "Big P" is—you guessed it—*polymorph other*.

Let's start with *harm*, because that's the easiest to explain, but it showcases some important design philosophy.

> This month, we're dealing with a **subject near and dear to your hearts:** Changes to Spells.

Harm is Harmful

No DM who's run a big fight hasn't been annoyed by the *harm* spell. One minute, you've got a dragon with 300 hit points, and the next, it has 1d4 hit points and is looking around saying, "What happened?" Sorry, dragon—no saving throw either.

Well, we fixed that one pretty easily. First, *harm* grants a saving throw (a Will save, because it is a clerical damaging spell). That's pretty good, but it might take things too far the other way. If that were the only change, then *harm* becomes a fairly unimpressive all-or-nothing spell (for a 6th-level cleric spell, anyway). Some things have poor Will saves (like giants), but the dragon laughs at the cleric that gets close enough to touch it. Unless the dragon rolls unusually low (like a natural 1), the cleric just becomes tomorrow's lunchmeat on the next round.

So the designers looked at the *harm* spell and other "instant kill" spells (even though *harm* didn't instantly kill its target, you've got to admit it's fairly close). *Slay living* sets a good precedent. It's a 5th-level spell that kills you outright, but it requires a Fortitude save, which monsters with lots of hit points tend to have as their best, or near-best saving throw. The partial effect is comparatively (compared to killing something outright) low, but that leaves room for *harm* to be the great spell for attacking those high Fort-save creatures while *slay living* goes after your Will or Reflex-save creatures. It fills an unusual niche, thus earning its level bump.

Not as devastating? True. But it is a lot more balanced. It also addresses the idea of giving partial effects to spells that didn't normally have saving throws but now do, and partial effects to spells that didn't have them before.

The philosophy behind that is really twofold. First, by making *harm* level dependent (it still causes a devastating amount of damage), it scales the spell up and works with the damage cap (explained in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Second, you want the high-level cleric who throws a high-level spell to feel he's accomplishing something. "All-or-nothing" spells tend to be pretty anticlimactic either way. Either the spell ends the encounter or does nothing at all.

Harm

Necromancy
Level: Clr 6, Destruction 6
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will half; see text
Spell Resistance: Yes

Harm charges a subject with negative energy that deals 10 points of damage per caster level (to a maximum of 150 points at 15th level). If the creature successfully saves, *harm* deals half this amount, but it cannot reduce the target's hit points to less than 1.

If used on an undead creature, *harm* acts like *heal*.

Hold Doesn't Help

That thought segues nicely into *hold person, hold monster,* and other "on/off" spells. As you know from the article on damage reduction, I'm not a

big fan of "on/off" effects in the game. The designers working on the revision (led by Andy Collins, Rich Baker, David Noonan, Rich Redman, and Skip Williams) received a lot of feedback on *hold person.* At 2nd or 3rd level, it was, quite simply, a killer spell. If the spell worked, it rendered a foe helpless for one round per level.

This proved problematic on a variety of fronts. While it sounds worthwhile to have a spell that takes a character or monster out of the fight for a short period of time, it seldom worked out that way. By rendering a target helpless, *hold person* paints a big, fat, time-sensitive bull's eye on the creature. Player characters get themselves into position to perform a coup de grace on the enemy as quickly as they can, and the DM might do that, too. It gets ugly.

But even if the DM doesn't choose to, or can't, finish off a player character who's being held, it turns into a long night for the player of the held character. In every RPG session there are times when you aren't personally going to be able to do anything. The *hold person* spell really accentuates that and forces players to sit and watch instead of play during the most active part of the game session.

The designers addressed the issue in a fairly clever way, hardly changing the spell at all. The spell stayed the same level but now works a lot like the "unconscious but dying" rules. Until the duration (still 1 round/level) runs out, the held character gets to make a saving throw every round to end the effect.

This addresses all the problem areas of the spell fairly easily. To address the "bull's eye" problem—well, it does encourage the foe to attack the target quickly, but a coup de grace attempt is a full-round action. A character has to get into position one round, then perform it the next. That should give the target of the *hold person* spell at least one, probably two, and maybe more chances to break the effects of the spell. If he doesn't—well, it's a dangerous world. At least he had several opportunities. And even if the character breaks out right away, a low-level spell that takes a creature out for one or two actions is still pretty good.

Naturally, this also addresses the "I'll go for a bag of chips" problem. The player whose character is held stays at the table and, every round, rolls a die. The other players can help, too—even if the cleric or wizard of the party doesn't have a spell to directly break the spell, she often has save-boosting or even Wisdom-enhancing spells that can give the affected character a better chance.

These are issues that also carry over to a variety of spells and spell effects. The hold spells still have the whole "on/off" issue, but as generally lower-level spells, we have to live with that sometimes. The round-by-round saving throw is a great improvement.

> Those of you who play wizards and sorcerers might want to **write your selection of *haste* in pencil** rather than ink.

Haste is Hard

The intention with the redesign of the *haste* spell for third edition was a good one: Develop a spell effect that works with the new action-based combat system. Unfortunately, since there are a good number of spells in the *Player's Handbook* and only so many playtesters, some things do get missed. *Haste* is one of those things.

It's just too good.

In several design documents and even in a few books like *Savage Species,* we talk about our design "acid test." In terms of spell design, whenever we create a new spell, we look at it in the context of all other spells at the same level, and at nearby levels. The biggest question most designers have is, "Have I just created a spell that's better (or worse) than every other spell at this level?"

We didn't think *haste* was better than all other 3rd-level spells. We were wrong.

Haste allows for multiple actions by a character. When you're talking about a non-spellcaster, that's not too bad, although it did lead to lots of confusion (ask the Sage). There are plenty of things in the game that allow a fighter to take an extra swing or a rogue to fire an extra arrow. The effects are seldom devastating. However, a spell that allows a character to cast another spell . . . let me just say, anyone who thinks that a ranged or melee attack is equivalent to being able to cast another spell in a round has not played enough spellcasters in their time. *Haste* not only proved better than any other 3rd-level spell, there were plenty of characters who would've happily sacrificed a 4th-level spell slot to gain its effects. Certainly, it completely obviated the need for the Quicken metamagic feat.

So, hold on to your spellbooks, but here's what we had to do. *Haste* no longer gives you an extra action during your turn. Instead, it now looks a little bit more like its 1st- and 2nd-Edition roots. Haste now increases your movement (by 30 feet), it gives you a +1 bonus to your attack rolls, a +1 dodge bonus to AC and Reflex saves (keeping it from becoming the best defensive spell in the game as well), and it only allows a character to take an extra attack when using the full attack action.

That's a pretty big change, and it's probably the biggest change to a single spell in the 3.5 revision, with one possible exception. Those of you who play wizards and sorcerers might want to write your selection of *haste* as a spell in pencil, now, instead of permanent ink (like any of my wizards and sorcerers used to be able to do). This should make spell selection a little more interesting, and now every spellcasting NPC, dragon, or monster you run into won't be firing off two spells every round.

The Big P

We never kept secret the fact that *polymorph other* had problems. The original printing of the *Player's Handbook* has one version, the second printing has another, and *Tome and Blood* even tried clarifying and fixing this spell. The RPGA membership has been terribly vocal about the spell as well—*polymorph other* was one of the first (and one of the few) spells banned from organized play. And with good reason: The number of creatures

out there to choose from and the flavor we tried to keep in *polymorph other* cause that spell and *polymorph self* get out of hand quickly. Is there a reason your fighter isn't a troll? Oh, because he's a planetar; of course.

Polymorph has been split up differently now. There's the *polymorph* spell, which works on any willing creature touched (yourself, your pal, and so on), and it allows you to transform that creature into another creature of its type or a select number of types (including aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, plant, or vermin—basically, living creatures). It imposes HD caps (your caster level in HD up to 15 HD), and it restricts size changes. The spell allows you to assume the physical characteristics of the creature (including physical ability scores) but not extraordinary, supernatural, or spell-like abilities, except for extraordinary attack forms (so the fighter who turns into a troll gains its Strength and its rend ability, but not its regeneration). Oh, and it's no longer permanent. The spell only lasts one minute per level, which seems fairly short but by the time you can cast the spell, you're looking at keeping this form for an entire fight, perhaps two.

The second part of the polymorph effect now lives in a spell called *baneful polymorph*. This is for when you want to turn your enemy into a toad or something equally unpleasant. There is a saving throw (with a +4 bonus if the form chosen would be fatal—like turning an orc into a tuna in the middle of the desert), and there are some other minor restrictions but, basically, if you use *baneful polymorph* on an enemy, you probably don't like him very much because he's in a lot of trouble if he fails that save. This spell is permanent.

This splitting of the polymorph effects seems like it should have been done a long time ago, but that's the way things often are in hindsight. The old *polymorph other* and *polymorph self* distinction seemed important until we realized that the two effects were pretty much the same, but that the spell itself hid two very different results. We tried very hard with third edition to break up spells that were really multiple spells under the same name, mostly because they seldom worked without tremendous amounts of confusion.

SAME TIME, NEXT MONTH

It's my hope these examples of changes to the spells in the 3.5 revision to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS help you understand the philosophy behind all the changes: Simplify, streamline, and clarify—oh, and to make the game more fun. For more information on the upcoming 3.5 revision, go check out the Wizards of the Coast website at **www.wizards.com/dnd.**

REVISION ALERT

Just before the revision releases, Dragon issue #309 will hit the shelves. This issue is important for several reasons, not the least of which is that it marks the transition from D&D 3.0 to D&D 3.5 for the material we present.

Don't worry though—starting in that issue (and perhaps even in issue #308), the changes caused by the revision will be clearly labled with a "Revision Alert" tag, so that you can more easily see where things have changed.

The Nodwick Chronicles, Volume Two continues the saga of Nodwick the Henchman and his adventurer employers! Thrill as they battle evil deities, unravel the mysteries of alternate dimensions, grapple with cosmic power and delve into the dankest dungeons! Collecting issues 7 through 12 of the fan-favorite comic book, this volume is a must-have for hench-heads everywhere! Only $15.95, on sale this summer!

At last! ALL the DORK TOWER comic strips from *Scrye Magazine*, *Gamespy.com* and *Interactive Week*, collected together for the first time in a beautiful trade paperback that just screams **"IT MUST BE MINE!"** Most of this collection has never been reprinted before! As *USA Today* said, "Lighten up with some fun 'toons courtesy of the prolific John Kovalic!" Just $15.95 for this tome of hilarity!

Shadowbane

Two New PC Races

by Clifford Horowitz · Art Provided by UbiSoft

Shadowbane is an online game set in a world destroyed by an ancient war. As in many fantasy worlds, elves were the first sentient beings to walk the face of Aerynth. And like many fantasy worlds, the mighty nations of the elves are now a thing of distant memory, and the race is in decline. However, unlike many other fantasy worlds, the ancient feud that drove the elves from power and that continues to seethe to this day is not with dwarves, but with men.

In a mighty war that shattered continents, elves and humans clashed, and in the process destroyed what once was. The world bears deep and lingering wounds from the blows these two peoples dealt one another, and life for all has changed drastically.

Perhaps most dramatic is a strange mystical event called the Turning, which has rendered most people virtually immortal. People can still die—the wars, the witch-hunts, and the dangerous wilds have certainly proven that—but no one stays dead for long.

It is into this world that you stride in search of adventure, riches, or perhaps a way to heal the world's wounds, fight old evils, and make Aerynth a better place. *Shadowbane* promises a dynamic world where your options are not limited to killing monsters and players, collecting their treasures, and gaining levels, although there is certainly plenty of that. There are guilds to join, secrets to uncover, and even organizations, cities, and empires to found—or lay siege to and destroy if your tastes run more to that arena.

Because *Shadowbane* is in many ways a classical fantasy world and game, many of the character options will be familiar to lovers of the genre. The standard fantasy mix of humans, elves, half-elves, and dwarves are available, and many players will delight in the option of playing a minotaur. One of these races, the shade, is a new concept, and an interesting option for a campaign world. Another, the aelfborn, is a new take on an old idea, and presents ways you can shake up the classics.

SHADES

Shades are a curious phenomenon new to the world. Perhaps only a century old as a race, most people distrust them. Gone are the days of mass burnings and imprisonment, but the shades have not forgotten the cruelty they endured, and it has left them wary of others.

Also called "pale ones," "the damned," or "stillborn," shades are only born to human parents. Sterile themselves, shades rely on their persecutors for each new generation. Years of study revealed that shades are human children whose fathers die before they are born. While not all human children who suffer the loss of a father are born shades, all shades invariably lost their father while still in the womb. The reason why this causes some human babies to be born shades is unknown, although experience has proven that *resurrection*, even if performed before the child is born, does nothing to reduce the chance of a pale one's birth.

The rise of shade births among humanity has sparked academic and religious musing as well as a great deal of uninformed supposition. Whole organizations, both genuine and fraudulent, now boom in many of the larger human cities, dedicated solely to administering preventative treatments to expecting mothers who are at increased risk of delivering a damned child. Bizarre rituals, exorcisms, and foul potions have all seen use by these specialized healers. The effectiveness of these treatments is debatable, but interestingly enough, many times these rites are administered by shades themselves.

Personality: Generations of persecution, harsh cleansing rites, slavery, and slaughter taught shades to trust few people. They are a suspicious lot and often come across as self-centered. This doesn't mean the race is selfish, but few others care about them, and they must take care of themselves. Their physical characteristics and talents often lead them to develop muted personalities. They can be passionate, but only after ensuring the situation is appropriate; it is difficult to move a shade to rash action. Still, this adversity teaches shades the value of true friendship, and once one earns a shade's trust, he can be assured that he'll never have a stauncher ally.

Physical Description: Shades share the physical dimensions of their human parents, standing from 5 feet to a little over 6 feet tall, and weighing somewhere between 125 and 250 pounds. Also as with humans, males tend to be larger than females. However, that is where the similarities end. While humans have a diverse array of skin tones and hair colors, all shades share a corpse-like, gray-white complexion and are completely hairless. They don't even grow eyebrows. Their sunken eyes lack pupils and irises, sitting as featureless, coal-black orbs. Their voices are raspy and most often faint, coming across as ghostly whispers. Their touch carries with it the chill of the grave.

Because they cannot give birth to more of their own, and they have only existed a short time, shades have yet to develop significant cultural trends of their own. Most dress in styles similar to the humans whose communities they call home, but strife often relegates them to lower classes, so most shades dress in the meager clothing they can afford.

Shades reach maturity at the same time as humans, sometime around age 15. Despite the claims of others that they are half dead already, however, they appear highly resistant to the grave's call. None have died of old age since their appearance on the world's stage a

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

If you like either of these races, ask your DM if she's willing to allow them in her campaign. However, there's more that can be done with these races than to simply play them. Both carry with them social troubles that your character might become burdened with that offer great roleplaying opportunities. For example:

- Perhaps your character is not a shade, but your twin brother is. Has he tainted your family, or is he a beloved sibling? Is he perhaps both?
- As a cleric to a god of death, shades pose a unique quandary. They're not undead, but they have an undeniable tie to the dead realms. Do you urge your faithful to accept these strange folk or cast them out?
- What is it that drives aelfborn insane? Can magical experiments bring them peace? Might you be willing to explore an aelfborn's madness, placing yourself at risk, in order to help him?
- What of aelfborn and psionics? Surely a mind in such a constant roil might not only be dangerous and fascinating to some psions, but such anguished energy might erupt in power itself. Is your aelfborn only the first of many to begin a new psionic tradition among them?

century ago. Some postulate, based on the trace signs of aging in existing specimens, that they could easily live as long as elves, lasting 700 years or more.

Relations: Of all the races, shades interact most commonly and most passionately with humans, their sires. Human reactions to shades, like all things human, are hard to generalize. Some people and communities despise the pale folk and treat them little differently from goblins or demons. Others take pity on what they see as abused brethren and take them in to provide shelter from the outside world. In general, shades' reactions to their human progenitors are outwardly placid, but filled with inner turmoil.

Every shade has a human he calls mother and the instinct to love her and other members of his family is just as strong in a shade as it is in any man. But after a lifetime of coldness and cruelty, many shades have come to fear, distrust, and sometimes even hate, humans. The average shade is wary of humans, moreso than any other race, but at the same time, there is a burning desire for acceptance and camaraderie from these same people. This manifests itself as a cautious reserve toward humans that can suddenly erupt into fierce friendship if stoked properly, or freeze to icy hate if provoked.

Although shades are distrustful of rigid hierarchies and webs of laws, they understand well the dwarven need to develop a friendship over a century or more, and this leads to a cool but cordial relationship between the two races. This common thread of understanding often serves as a starting point for friendships that become as solid as stone.

Many shades have tried to become friendly with halflings, for the small folk's propensity to wander would seem a better way to live for a people who can call no place home. But halflings (and gnomes as well), while rarely taking issue with shades, often find the pale folk's lack of humor and exuberance a bit too dour.

Elves, despite their more freewheeling ways, find little in common with shades, who in turn find little in common with the. In fact, many elves are uneasy around shades because of the latter's unusual tie to death, which seems distinctly unnatural. However, the two have centuries to prove themselves to one another, and so the relationship between these two peoples might change for the better over time. Never before have the elves shared the ages with another race as long lived as themselves.

Half-orcs also find little use for shades, and the two live very different lives. Where half-orcs are often loud and full of bluster, shades are silent and prefer to slip away unseen. Still, both share human ancestry, and both know what it is to be rejected by family, so friendships between half-orcs and shades is not unheard of.

Alignment: Too many times, secular or religious law has been used as a rationale to assault shades, and because of this, the pale folk have developed an aversion to complex bureaucracy and layers of authority. Many shades are neutral or chaotic for this reason. There is an even mix of good, evil, and neutral shades however. Some are as twisted and dark as their detractors say, while others possess souls as gleaming and pure as the most devout paladins.

Shade Lands: Shades are still too new to the world to have a nation unto themselves. This is stymied further by the fact that there are no shade families; they cannot produce more of their own kind. All shades come from human families, and retain emotional ties to those lines at least initially. Indeed, not all shades are turned out of their homes by their human relatives.

However, shades have been displaced enough over time that "pale quarters" now exist in many of the larger cities and strongholds dominated by humans. These ghettos are places the shades congregate and make their own. Many times they are left to fend for themselves, and because of this others fear to enter these areas.

Religion: As a whole, shades do not have a racial deity. There are some rumors that certain gods of death claim shades as their own, and indeed these churches count many shades among their clergy, but shades lack a unifying god that shapes their culture.

Language: Shades speak Common, just like their human progenitors.

Names: Because shades are born into human homes and live predominantly in human lands, shades usually have the same style of names as the humans they came from.

Adventurers: With so many cast out of their birth homes, and so many more unable to find acceptance in other communities, a great number of shades take up lives of adventuring. Always on the move, they never stay in one place long enough to deeply feel the resentment of communities, and for most, the treasure hordes of dungeons is the only escape from poverty. As an added boon, most adventurers are more accepting of oddities such as shades, and it is among these allies that shades most often find true friendship.

Shade Racial Traits

The following are all racial traits of shades.

• +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma: Shades have a notoriously light touch and slight step, granting them extraordinary grace, and their minds are as adroit as their bodies. However, their closeness to death is too apparent to hide, and is unsettling to others. In addition, shades have demonstrated weaker resolve than many other races, and have a tendency toward distraction. Some attribute this to a continual exposure to the spirit world.

• Medium-size: As Medium-size creatures, shades have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size. Shade base speed is 30 feet.

• See Ethereal: Shades see ethereal beings and objects naturally and continually. Many point to this as another piece of evidence that proves they are half dead already.

• Ghost Touch: Shades can freely touch the incorporeal, and can strike at incorporeal targets without penalty or the normal miss chance. This applies to all melee weapons a shade makes as well, but not to ranged attacks or spells.

• Automatic Languages: Common. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).

• Favored Class: Rogue. Their natural abilities combine well with their learned behavior of being silent and unnoticed to make shades formidable rogues.

• Level Adjustment: Because of powerful abilities, shades receive a +2 level adjustment.

AELFBORN

Elves are a magical race. Their long life, their alien beauty, their natural inclination toward wizardry, everything about them tells of the magic running in their veins. Humans lack these gifts, but instead of settling for being inferior, they compensate with a passion for accomplishment that is strange to a more gifted race. What humans are not granted, they pursue with intense fire. And so these two races stand in balance.

However, just because the racial nations balance does not mean that they mix well, and the aelfborn are living proof of that. Sterile half-breeds born from the union between elf and human, the aelfborn demonstrate the unstable mix of their heritage not in physical defect, but in mental.

Races as gifted as the elves were not meant to contain the passion and drive humans developed. And while such a thing can be a powerful combination, few aelfborn are stable enough to use of this unique combination.

Personality: Many aelfborn come across as cold and distrustful. Oftentimes cast from their birth lands and unable to form long-lasting communities of their own, aelfborn learn early that few tolerate them or welcome them, and almost none trust them. Unfortunately, this is true even of their own kind. Thus aelfborn often weave a protective shell of spite and scorn about themselves. Should someone prove a friend however, the aelfborn will be as that person's brother and staunchest ally.

Aelfborn are difficult to predict because the mix of their blood is unstable and volatile, and it drives the aelfborn mad. Each and every one of them is insane. How this manifests is as varied as the aelfborn's human side. Some develop multiple personalities, some succumb to homicidal fits, others yearn to see fire, no matter what or who is burning. It could be anything, but invariably the condition makes life among others difficult. Although not continually in the grip of madness, the apparent

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Even if no one in the party plays one of these races, you can still put them to good use in your campaign. Consider the following:

• Shades could be new to your world as well. What if they suddenly began being born? What's causing it? If more and more humans continue birthing shades instead of humans, the human race will die out. Is this the beginning of the twilight years of humanity?

• Shades might not necessarily be born. Perhaps those brought back to life don't always come back to full life. Maybe they are the result of a lesser resurrection spell, one available to lower-level casters, but less effective.

• Humans and elves have mingled freely in the past, and half-elves have none of the problems the aelfborn do. So what happened to them? Are they evidence of a more ancient, more inherently magical race of elves still in the world somewhere? Perhaps these mysterious elves are closer to the elves of the ancient empires.

• The will-buttressing tattoos of the aelfborn are a part of their birthing rituals, but are they useful only to keep the half-breeds sane? What would happen if an already stable person received these marks? Might they develop an indomitable will? There might be people willing to pay handsomely to find out.

randomness, and severity, of these attacks are enough to make aelfborn a danger to those around them.

Physical Appearance: Lithe and sleek in build, but more robust than elves, aelfborn range from 5 to 6 feet tall and weigh anywhere from 90 to 180 pounds. They bear the homogenous honeyed complexion of their elven parents. Their hair, however, can be nearly any color. Bone white, jet-black, and all shades and combinations of brunette, blonde, and red crown the aelfborn. They reach maturity sometime after the age of 15. However, the volatile mix in their blood ultimately takes its toll on all aelfborn, who age faster than either of their parents; most die before reaching their 80th birthday.

The most distinguishing physical trait of the aelfborn is their tattoos. To be aelfborn is to wrestle with madness every waking minute, and many of the sleeping ones as well. Long ago, these tortured people learned that certain mystical runes, when permanently drawn on the face, help abate the madness aelfborn suffer. Now all aelfborn receive these marks immediately upon birth. The rare half-breed without them is hunted without quarter in all but the most depraved lands.

Relations: Aelfborn, sadly, are almost friendless. Elves see them as the worst of their own species further sullied with human frailties. Most of the other races simply don't trust the mental instability that all aelfborn suffer. Of all the races it is the half-orcs who suffer the least discomfort in dealing with the tattooed folk. The wildness of aelfborn behavior is sporadic and often violent or destructive, something the half-orcs appreciate like few others.

Alignment: Despite their apparent lean toward chaos that insanity might suggest, the aelfborn are simply far too individualistic to have a racial alignment leaning. Each makes her way through the world in her own way.

Aelfborn Lands: Aelfborn have the same difficulties establishing communities that shades do. Sterility prevents them from propagating their own people, so they must continually gather others of their ilk together in order to make a town or village survive. However, they face an additional difficulty that shades do not: short lifespans. While shades could spend centuries drawing more of their own kind into an area, aelfborn generations are even shorter than those of humans. They simply do not have time enough in the world to replace their elderly and dead. There are small aelfborn communes to be sure, but they rarely last more than a few generations, and are more the exception than the rule. Most aelfborn are content to wander other races' lands on their own.

Religion: While there is no chief racial deity for the aelfborn, many of them turn to Obad-Hai with a fanatical ferocity. The grand scope of nature, serenity enveloping savage brutality, is the perfect analogy for the aelfborn condition, or so the devout feel.

Languages: Aelfborn speak Common and Elven.

Names: Aelfborn have either human or elven names, depending on where they were born and raised. Often, however, they'll take up a pseudonym upon reaching adulthood and setting out on their own. Since so many of them wind up in the wilds, these often have a nature theme. Titles such as Green Warden, Tree Friend, Wolf Pack, and Strong Claw are demonstrative of this.

Adventurers: With no community willing to take them for long, if at all, life on the road is often the only option for an aelfborn. Their independent nature and constant need to travel makes them well suited to be adventurers.

Aelfborn Racial Traits

The following are all racial traits of the aelfborn.

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom: The volatile mix of racial blood grants the aelfborn incredible adroitness in mind and body, but the strain of these gifts leaves both weak at the same time as well.
- Bonus Feat: Aelfborn retain some of the fire for accomplishment from their human parent, but it does not burn quite as brightly. This bonus feat must be specifically related to the aelfborn's class. Fighters must select it from their bonus feat list; spellcasters must take a metamagic, spell related, or item creation feat; barbarians gain a rage feat (as described in *Masters of the Wild*); and so on. An aelfborn of any class can take Skill Focus in a class skill as this feat.
- Bonus Skill Focus: Again, the aelfborn retain some of humanity's drive for learning, but their mixed blood muddles their abilities. Every 5th level the aelfborn gains the Skill Focus feat for free. He can assign the feat to any skill in which he has at least one rank.
- Medium-size: As Medium-size creatures, aelfborn have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Aelfborn have a base speed of 30 feet.
- Low-light Vision: Aelfborn can see twice as far as humans in starlight, torchlight, moonlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Skills: +1 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks.
- Elven Blood: For all special abilities and effects, an aelfborn is considered an elf. Aelfborn, for example, can use elven weapons and magic items with racially specific elven powers as if they were elves.
- Madness: Aelfbon gain an inherent penalty to Wisdom as they advance in level. At every 2nd level, this penalty increases by one (0 at 1st level, -1 at 2nd level, -2 at 4th level, and so on).

If you have access to them, you might consider using the sanity rules from *Call of Cthulu* instead of the above mechanic. The bookkeeping is a tad more extensive, but the system allows for greater flexibility. If you decide to take this option, be sure to read the appendix dealing with mental hardness rules when using sanity loss in a fantasy game. Remove this mental hardness whenever their tattoos are dispelled or suppressed.

- Tattoos: The mystical tattoos of the Aelfborn stave off some of the effects of their inherent madness. Should their magical tattoos ever be suppressed (through an *anti-magic field*, they must make a Will save (DC equals 10) every round or suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell until the tattoo's magic returns. This is a supernatural ability.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Elven. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Ranger. The lonely life of the ranger holds much appeal to aelfborn. Animals rarely judge like humanoids do, and in the wilderness their insanity can go ignored. Despite their natural intellect, most aelfborn spellcasters are sorcerers, not wizards.

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PRESTIGE CLASSES FOR CULTISTS OF GOOD MONSTERS

by Chris Tanner · illustrated by James Nelson

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

In an evil campaign, such as those described in the *Book of Vile Darkness*, the good monster prestige classes presented here could take the place of their evil counterparts (see *Dragon* #300). Such cultists could constitute a constant annoyance for villainous PCs, or they could become real threats.

Even in a nonevil campaign, good monster cults could pose a threat to the PCs. Characters who, through some accident or twist of fate, burn down a museum or a bardic college might soon come under attack by a local Artist's Vengeance band. Or perhaps the PCs try to harvest some from the local forest, only to be attacked by tree-friends.

On the other hand, members of these cults could serve as needed allies for PCs. For example, a multitude of small Artist's Vengeance groups might spring up in a despotic society. Such disparate groups could constitute a small army if brought together under strong leadership. With a little nudging from the PCs, any of these cults could be organized into a dangerous band of freedom fighters.

The minions of powerful evil creatures seem to have endless means at their disposal to harness the forces of darkness and destruction. Depraved cults dedicated to beings of unspeakable evil seem to abound in both civilized and undeveloped lands. The terrible might that such cultists wield in the names of their horrid masters allows them to crush the unprepared, enslave those weaker than themselves, and leave devastation in their wake.

Until recently, there has been precious little evidence of good counterparts to such servants of evil. But research has revealed the existence of several mysterious cults dedicated to the service of good creatures. Members of such cults revere and serve particular sorts of creatures that are dedicated to good—the kind and protective dryad, the creative lillend, the noble unicorn, and other powerful creatures of light. As they delve ever deeper into the mysteries of their patron creatures, these cultists are transformed in mind, body, and spirit, acquiring new powers with which to serve the cause of good. Such "mystery-walkers" are a positive force in the world, even though their actions go unseen by most.

Each of the prestige classes detailed below is associated with a cult dedicated to one kind of good creature. From the moment a character is initiated into the mysteries of such a cult, she acquires new abilities in accordance with the goals of the revered creature. At each level, the cultist is drawn deeper and deeper into the rituals and beliefs of the cult, until at last she undergoes a permanent physical transformation to become more like the creature.

THE WHITEHORN

No creature is more universally revered by good mortals than the unicorn. To slay one is a sin of the highest order, and only the purest of heart can use one as a mount. Now and then, a humanoid who is granted this privilege forms a strange and lasting bond with the unicorn that leads her to become a member of the mystery cult known as the Whitehorns.

Whitehorn packs appear from time to time in serene glades throughout the land. Rumors of midnight revelries and sacred rituals conducted under the full moon have spread to civilized areas, attracting the attention of the curious. But by the time such interlopers arrive, all they find are open glades, strangely serene and empty.

The organizational structure of a whitehorn pack is similar to that of a herd of horses. Whitehorns, however, tend not to spend much time in one another's company, for most prefer a solitary life. On the rare occasions when they gather for ritual or defense, whitehorn packs can be lethally effective against incursions into their glades by beings bent on destruction or evil.

All whitehorns have been riders of unicorns at one time or another. Most were once clerics of good-aligned deities who sought knowledge about the legendary healing powers of the unicorn's horn. Some fighters specializing in mounted warfare also choose to follow the whitehorn's path.

Characters who wander into an enchanted glade on a moonlit night might end up running for cover from the NPC whitehorns who guard it. Or PCs might come to the aid of the whitehorns, helping them defend their territory from invasion.

Class features

All the following are class features of the whitehorn prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The whitehorn is proficient with javelin, shortspear, halfspear, longspear, ranseur, guisarme, glaive, light lance, and heavy lance. She gains no new armor or shield proficiencies.

White Horn (Ex): At 1st level, the whitehorn grows a small, white horn in the center of her forehead. With it, she can gore an opponent as a primary natural attack. Her gore attack deals 1d6 points of damage if she is Medium-size or 1d4 points of damage if she is Small. This attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the whitehorn's foe. If she uses a full attack action, she can make normal weapon attacks and use her gore as a secondary natural attack at the standard -5 penalty. Any applicable Strength bonus on damage rolls is determined normally, depending on whether the gore was used as a primary or secondary attack.

Touch of the Horn (Sp): Beginning at 2nd level, the character's horn grants her special healing powers. At 2nd level, she can cast *cure light wounds* three times per day. At 3rd level, she can cast *cure moderate wounds* once per day. At 4th level, she can cast *neutralize poison* once per day. Each of these abilities is in addition to the ones gained before. These spells are cast as a sorcerer of a level equal to the whitehorn's character level.

Magic Circle Against Evil (Sp): At 5th level, the whitehorn can cast *magic circle*

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

The good monster cults presented in this article are by no means the only possibilities. Similar cultist prestige classes could be built around other good creatures from the *Monster Manual*, *Monster Manual II*, or *Fiend Folio*. To create such a class, simply give the character access to some of the monster's signature powers, scaling them down as needed if they seem too powerful. For example, the lammasu's continuous *magic circle against evil* ability might be overpowering in the hands of a player character, but it could be balanced by making it a spell-like ability with limited uses per day, gained at a certain level of a prestige class.

A cult centered around a good monster can also provide an interesting element for a player character's background. Perhaps the character's parents or relatives are members of the cult, and the PC hopes to follow in their footsteps. Meanwhile, the character must help the cult maintain its secrecy.

When a PC joins a cult, what happens to his relationships with former adventuring companions? Does the character devote time to both cult and companions, or does the organization begin to take control of the new member's habits? As with real-world cults, the organizations described here could be a source of interpersonal conflict for both the character and the rest of the group. The other PCs might even feel compelled to "rescue" their friend from the cult's clutches.

The cult might also serve as a way for a PC to infiltrate a certain area. Perhaps an artifact or other powerful item is needed for the party's success, and it lies within a dryad's grove. The PCs could rush to the defense of the grove, hoping to be initiated into the cult and thus gain access to the item they seek. Such tactics, of course, might provoke the other cultists to vengeance if the characters are not careful to use their privileged access for good causes.

against evil spell once per day as a sorcerer of a level equal to the whitehorn's character level.

Unicorn Apotheosis (Ex): At 5th level, the whitehorn gains low-light vision and darkvision (60-foot range) if she did not already have them. Her type changes to magical beast, making her even more like the noble steed she so admires.

HIT DIE D10

WHITEHORN Requirements

To become a whitehorn, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic good.

Gender: Female.

Ride: 8 ranks.

Feats: Mounted Combat.

Special: The candidate must have ridden a unicorn at some time in her life.

WHITEHORN Class Skills

The whitehorn's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: Jump, Swim.

Dex: Move Silently, Ride.

Con: –

Int: Knowledge (nature).

Wis: Listen, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

Cha: Animal Empathy, Handle Animal.

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

THE FOLLOWER OF THE SKYSERPENT

A flash of bright color across the sky, a sweep of feathered wings, and a cry of reptilian fury herald the coming of justice. Evildoers glance over their shoulders at the sound, and their palms begin to sweat, for they know that the couatl has come at last to smite them. The few humanoids who venerate the couatl, or skyserpent, as it is sometimes called, share its drive to purge evil from the land.

Almost as fearsome and beautiful as the creatures they venerate, the followers of the skyserpent usually wear garments made from or decorated with brightly colored feathers. They regard all beings with good souls as allies and brethren. Perhaps more so than the members of any other mystery cult, they believe in proactive tactics designed to stop evil before it happens.

Driven by their hatred of evil and their desire to eradicate it, followers of the skyserpent frequently join forces to purge the world of spite and malice. Such groups, often called featherbands, are not unlike paladin orders in structure. Featherband members usually keep tallies of the villains they have defeated, scratching marks into their weapons, armor, or shields. The individual with the highest tally usually assumes leadership of the group.

Wizards and sorcerers often become followers of the skyserpent because they can retain some spellcasting advancement while gaining good saves and natural weapons. Clerics and paladins of the more militant good-aligned deities might also be drawn to the service of the couatl because the creature's goals and methods are so like their own.

Followers of the skyserpent can become powerful allies for PCs, although they tend to be overzealous. Should even one PC in an adventuring party fall short of the follower's high expectations, cooperation might terminate abruptly.

Class features

All of the following are class features of the follower of the skyserpent prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A follower of the skyserpent gains no new weapon, armor, or shield proficiencies.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At every even-numbered follower of the skyserpent level, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class to which he belonged before adding the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (metamagic or item creation feats, or the like). If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a follower of the skyserpent, the player must decide to which class to add each level for determining spells per day and spells known.

Poison Bite (Ex): At 1st level, the follower of the skyserpent grows poisonous fangs that enable him to bite as an attack action. His bite is a primary

WHITEHORN Advancement

Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	White horn
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	*Touch of the horn* (*cure light wounds* 3/day)
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	*Touch of the horn* (*cure moderate wounds* 1/day)
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	*Touch of the horn* (*neutralize poison* 1/day)
5th	+5	+4	+4	+2	*Magic circle against evil*, unicorn apotheosis

FOLLOWER OF THE SKYSERPENT Advancement

Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/Spells Known
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Poison bite	
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	*Skybound*	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Eschew Materials	
4th	+2	+4	+4	+4	Serpent's tail	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+4	+4	+4	Couatl apotheosis	

FOLLOWER OF THE SKYSERPENT Requirements

HIT DIE D8

To qualify as a follower of the skyserpent, a character must fulfill the following requirements.

Alignment: Lawful good.

Concentration: 8 ranks.

Sense Motive: 8 ranks.

Spellcraft: 8 ranks.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 2nd-level arcane or divine spells.

Special: The candidate must have caught a villain red-handed and defeated (though not necessarily killed) him unaided. The character must then receive the blessing of a couatl for performing the deed.

FOLLOWER OF THE SKYSERPENT Class Skills

The follower of the skyserpent's class skills (and the key ability modifier for each) are:

Str: –

Dex: Move Silently, Tumble.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Scry, Search, Spellcraft.

Wis: Heal, Innuendo, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot.

Cha: Gather Information.

Skill Points per Level: 4 + Int modifier.

natural attack that deals 1d4 points of damage if he is Medium-size, or 1d2 points of damage if he is Small. This attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the follower of the skyserpent's foe. If the follower uses a full attack action, he can make normal weapon attacks and use his bite as a secondary natural attack at the standard -5 penalty. Any applicable Strength bonus on damage rolls is determined normally, depending on whether the bite was used as a primary or secondary attack.

The follower of the skyserpent delivers his poison (Fortitude save DC 10 + follower of the skyserpent level + Constitution modifier) with each successful bite attack. The initial damage is 1d4 points of Strength damage, and the secondary damage is 2d4 points of Strength damage.

Skybound (Sp): Beginning at 2nd level, the follower of the skyserpent can cast *fly* as a sorcerer of a level equal to the character's follower of the skyserpent level.

Eschew Materials: At 3rd level, the follower of the skyserpent gains Eschew Materials (from *Tome and Blood*–see the Eschew Materials sidebar on page 76 for a complete description) as a bonus feat, whether or not he meets the prerequisite.

Serpent's Tail (Ex): At 4th level, the follower of the skyserpent grows a long, snaking tail. He can use this appendage to constrict an opponent up to one size category larger than himself with a successful grapple check. This attack deals 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage plus one and one-half times his Strength bonus (if he has one), or his full Strength penalty (if his Strength score is below 10).

Couatl Apotheosis (Ex): At 5th level, the follower of the skyserpent sprouts feathery wings that grant him a fly speed of 60 feet (good maneuverability). His type changes to outsider, making him even more like the creature he venerates. He gains darkvison (60-foot range). Unlike most outsiders, a follower can be raised and resurrected as normal for the follower's former type.

THE TREE-FRIEND

Although she cares for the forest as a whole, a dryad is bound to a single tree with which she shares her soul. Anyone who helps protect the woodlands is a friend to the elusive fey creature, but one who protects the dryad's own tree is also a personal benefactor and savior.

A tree-friend is a member of a cult that has assumed responsibility for the protection of one or more dryad trees as well as the surrounding woodlands. A tree-friend's devotion to the woodlands in general and to dryads in particular is unsurpassed. When the eternal glades are in peril, he moves as quietly as a leaf falling in autumn and strikes with the strength of the mighty oak. Woe to those who feel the wrath of a tree-friend, for it is like the fury of nature itself.

Tree-friends are often organized into loose bands that monitor specific areas. Each member of the group operates independently but assists the others as needed. Larger groups of tree-friends are called branches; smaller ones are known as twigs.The eldest tree-friends usually assume positions of leadership, directing watches and overseeing the laying of defensive traps and snares.

Most tree-friends were once rangers or druids, but some were clerics of nature deities. Forest-dwelling barbarians also tend to be protective of the wild lands, so they too might find this prestige class an intriguing option for advancement.

If an NPC tree-friend believes that intruders intend harm to his charges, he might follow them for miles, keeping just out of sight, then turn the task of monitoring them over to the next member of his branch or twig. In combat, he uses the cover of the forest to best advantage, striking from concealment to minimize losses.

TREE-FRIEND Requirements

HIT DIE D10

To become a tree-friend, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic good, chaotic neutral, or neutral good.

Wilderness Lore: 8 ranks.

Knowledge (Nature): 8 ranks.

Special: The candidate must have saved at least one tree to which a dryad was bound from destruction or corruption.

TREE-FRIEND Class Skills

The tree-friend's class skills (and the key ability for each) are:

Str: Climb, Swim.

Dex: Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently.

Con: –

Int: Craft (any), Knowledge (nature), Search.

Wis: Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

Cha: –

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier.

Class features

All the following are class features of the tree-friend prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A tree-friend gains no new weapon,

armor, or shield proficiencies.

Seasonal Change (Ex): Like the dryad, a tree-friend undergoes changes in physical appearance with the seasons. During the spring and summer, a tree-friend's hair resembles green, leafy vines. In the fall, it turns red or gold and becomes thinner and finer, like autumn leaves. In winter, it is white as snow. The tree-friend's personality also changes with the seasons-he tends to be mirthful and joyous in spring and summer, quiet and even slightly depressed in autumn, and cold and removed in winter. When in a wilderness environment that matches the seasonal change the tree-friend is experiencing, the tree-friend gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks.

Nature's Healing (Su): A tree-friend is so in tune with the woodlands that he can tap their energy to heal himself. He can cure a number of hit points each day equal to his Charisma bonus times his tree-friend level, and he can spread this healing out among several uses. The tree-friend must be in physical contact with a living tree to use this ability.

Speak with Plants (Sp): At 2nd level, the tree-friend gains the ability to use *speak with plants* once per day per tree-friend level as a sorcerer of a level equal to the tree-friend's character level.

Charm Person (Sp): Beginning at 3rd level, a tree-friend can use *charm person* once per day per tree-friend level as a sorcerer of a level equal to the tree-friend's character level.

Tree Stride (Sp): Upon reaching 4th level, the tree-friend gains the ability to use *tree stride* once per day per tree-friend level as a sorcerer of a level equal to the tree-friend's character level.

Dryad Apotheosis (Ex): At 5th level, the tree-friend's type changes to fey, making him even more like the dryads he so admires. His features become more delicate, beautiful, and ethereal, and his ears acquire slight points. He gains low-light vision if he did not have it already, and his Charisma score increases by +2.

ARTIST'S VEGEANCE

TREE-FRIEND

THE ARTIST'S VENGEANCE

The strange and beautiful creatures known as lillends are utterly dedicated to the defense of the arts and all forms of artistic expression. Anyone who dares to defile a masterpiece or smash a priceless musical instrument might become the target of a lillend's wrath. Those mortals who espouse the

TREE-FRIEND Advancement

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+2	Seasonal change, nature's healing
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+3	*Speak with plants*
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+3	*Charm person*
4th	+4	+1	+4	+4	*Tree stride*
5th	+5	+2	+4	+4	Dryad apotheosis

same causes merit special respect from these extraplanar patrons and protectors of the arts.

The Artist's Vengeance began as an underground association of bards from all lands who shared one common trait: Their work had been heckled, censored, or destroyed. After lillends came to the defense of some members, slaying those who had discredited the artists and destroyed their work, the group developed into a lillend-worshiping cult. Now, members of the cult (artist's vengeances) work from the shadows to defend both artwork and artists, and they actively seek revenge on anyone who would destroy art, inhibit artistic expression, or harm an artist.

Most Artists' Vengeance bands meet in secret bardic colleges or thieves' guilds, far from the prying eyes of the authorities. Some even take to the wilderness, meeting outside a city before beginning a night's work. Artists' Vengeance groups usually operate democratically, often with no specific leader. Because the organization acts in secret and is often outside the law, authority figures and wealthy nobles tend to view it as a threat. To the common folk, however, the Artists' Vengeance represents light in a realm of darkness—a flame of inspiration that cannot be extinguished.

The typical artist's vengeance was once a bard, and many were bards of great renown before adopting the class. Nonbards are rare, although characters of other prestige classes that emphasize musical talent might also qualify.

Characters could encounter an NPC artist's vengeance who has come to the aid of a bard or other artist and work cooperatively with her. Alternatively, if the PCs have inadvertently desecrated or destroyed a classic piece of art while sacking a dungeon or keep, they could find themselves facing the legendary wrath of the lillend cult.

Class features

All the following are class features of the artist's vengeance prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An artist's vengeance gains no new weapon, armor, or shield proficiencies.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: At every odd-numbered artist's vengeance level, the character gains new bard spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in the bard class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit of the bard class.

Bardic Knowledge: If the character already has the bardic knowledge ability, her artist's vengeance levels stack with the levels of any other classes that grant her that ability for the purpose of determining the bonus. For example, a Bard 7/artist's vengeance 3 with an Intelligence score of 14 gains a +12 bonus on bardic knowledge checks.

Lillend's Song (Su): Beginning at 1st level, the artist's vengeance can call upon inspiration from a lillend to infuse her creations with quality and style. When she does so, she gains a bonus equal to her artist's vengeance level on a single Perform check. The artist's vengeance can use this ability once per day at 1st level and twice per day at 4th level.

Lillend's Tail (Ex): At 2nd level, the artist's vengeance grows a long, multicolored, snakelike tail. With it, she can make a primary natural attack, dealing 2d4 points of damage if she is Medium-size or 1d6 points of damage if she is Small. This attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the whitehorn's foe. If she uses a full attack action, she can make normal weapon attacks and use her tail as a secondary natural attack at the standard -5 penalty. Any applicable Strength bonus on damage rolls is determined normally, depending on whether the tail was used as a primary or secondary attack.

Fire Resistance (Ex): At 3rd level, the character's skin toughens and becomes more like a lillend's. The character gains fire resistance equal to 5 + her artist's vengeance level.

Lillend Apotheosis (Ex): At 5th level, the artist's vengeance completes her

HIT DIE D8

ARTIST'S VENGEANCE Requirements

To qualify as an artist's vengeance, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic good.

Perform: 8 ranks.

Intimidate: 8 ranks.

Class Feature: Bardic music ability.

Special: The candidate's art (be it dance, prose, painting, or any other form) must have been attacked, unfairly critiqued, or destroyed by another force.

ARTIST'S VENGEANCE Class Skills

The artist's vengeance's class skills (and the key ability for each) are:

Str: —

Dex: Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Pick Pocket.

Con: Concentration.

Int: Appraise, Craft (any), Decipher Script (exclusive skill), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Speak Language, Spellcraft.

Wis: Listen, Profession (any), Spot, Sense Motive.

Cha: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, Perform, Use Magic Device (exclusive skill).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int Modifier.

ARTIST'S VENGEANCE Advancement

Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day/Spells Known
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic knowledge, lillend's song 1/day	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Lillend's tail	
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Fire resistance	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Lillend's song 2/day	
5th	+3	+2	+4	+4	Lillend apotheosis	+1 level of existing class

transformation into a defender of creativity. Her type becomes outsider, and she gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet. Unlike most outsiders, an artist's vengeance can be raised and resurrected as per her former type. Feathered wings of incredible beauty sprout from her back, granting her a fly speed of 70 feet (average).

ESCHEW MATERIALS [Metamagic]

You can cast spells without material components.

Prerequisite: Any other metamagic feat.

Benefit: An eschewed spell can be cast with no material components. Spells without material components or whose material components cost more than 1 gp are not affected by this feat. An eschewed spell uses up a spell slot of the spell's normal level, modified by any other metamagic feats.

MONSTER CULTS AND GODS

In the process of spreading their word to the faithful, many gods use certain creatures as holy beasts, symbols, or totems. By fostering cults dedicated to these creatures, the deity might gain some new worshipers. Cults that revere a particular deity's holy beast might operate somewhat differently than they would otherwise, adopting the deity's focus, attitude, and goals. Often in such cases, the cult directly worships the deity as well as the monster.

Any deity can favor a particular sort of creature and sponsor the monster cult dedicated to it. The Holy Beast salient divine ability, described below, provides an additional benefit to a deity with a designated holy beast.

Holy Beast

The deity can use its holy beast as an additional location for remote sensing.

Benefit: The deity chooses one kind of creature as its holy beast. The deity may now use any creature of that kind that shares its alignment with the deity as the focus for its remote sensing ability, as if the creature were a holy site. (For example, a deity of divine rank 8 with the Holy Beast (unicorns) salient divine ability can sense everything within 8 miles of any unicorn.) A deity with this ability usually enforces strict penalties for slaying, defiling, or otherwise harming its holy beast.

Notes: The deity can gain this ability multiple times, choosing a new type of creature each time.

Suggested Portfolio Elements: Nature.

Monster Cults in the Forgotten Realms

In the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, several deities seem to be perfect matches for the cults described here.

The Tree-Friend

Patron Deities: Sylvanus, Shiallia.

A tree-friend of Sylvanus typically adopts the role of woodland sentinel because he views the destruction of trees and plants as a sin beyond redemption. Sylvanus's holy beast, the dryad, is revered as a living embodiment of the god's will and the perfect role model for all tree-friends.

Shiallia's tree-friends are more playful and motherly than those of Sylvanus, but no less dedicated to their tasks. She uses the cult to protect the wild and to help those who are lost within it find their way.

The Artist's Vengeance

Patron Deities: Liira, Milil.

Liira opposes oppression because it is a deterrent to joy. A subjugated society is an unhappy one, so her Artist's Vengeance cult works against the forces of tyranny whenever possible. Bane's return means that cult members must redouble their efforts.

Milil, the ultimate performer, views tyranny as a hateful, controlling force that inhibits those who make a living from their art. His cult views oppression as a destruction of self-the very antithesis of its members' beliefs.

The Whitehorn

Patron Deity: Lurue.

Lurue, who counts many unicorns among her worshipers, believes that any being pure enough to ride a unicorn is a soul worth watching. Her whitehorn cults work primarily to keep unicorn glades safe and secret, but they also help recently *awakened* animals adjust to their new world.

The Follower of the Skyserpent

Patron Deity: Ubtao.

One legend (which the members of Ubtao's cult believe) states that the god created the first dinosaurs after witnessing a couatl in action. Because of this, his followers of the skyserpent (or *ruk'cho*, as they call themselves) revere the couatl as a symbol of perfection and justice.

Monster Cults with the Player's Handbook

Several deities from the *Player's Handbook* could also make use of the cults described here.

The Tree Friend

Patron Deity: Obad-Hai.

The Shalm uses his cult to protect the woodlands from needless destruction and to maintain the harmony of the natural world. His tree-friends wear masks of leaves to better emulate his visage.

The Artist's Vengeance

Patron Deity: Olidammara.

The tightly regimented lifestyle enforced by a typical totalitarian regime is the polar opposite of Olidammara's ideology. In his eyes, to destroy a piece of music is a sin, and to stop people from having a good time is a blasphemy. His cult works to disrupt overly regimented societies wherever they appear.

The Whitehorn

Patron Deity: Ehlonna.

Ehlonna believes in the protection and preservation of life, and the holy symbol of her clerics is a unicorn. Her Whitehorn cult fights against the destruction of the beautiful aspects of nature.

The Follower of the Skyserpent

Patron Deity: Heironeous.

Heironeous is the deity of valor, and few creatures are more courageous in the face of evil than the couatl. Indeed, the creature is a symbol of invincibility in many cultures. Heironeous's followers of the skyserpent charge into battle against evil with a fury not unlike that of the beast they seek to emulate.

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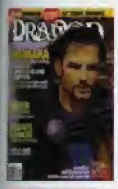

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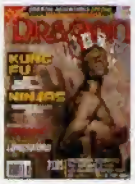

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A Song of Ice and Fire
THE SAGA OF WESTEROS

by Wolfgang Baur and Shelly Baur Illustrated by Donato Giancola
based on novels by George R. R. Martin

Westeros is a land at war. Lords and princelings battle for the throne with steel and gold, pillaging the countryside, settling old grudges, and creating new enemies in what was once a unified kingdom. While the nobles play this game of thrones, creatures that have passed into legend reawaken to terrorize the world, and the timing of the civil unrest couldn't be worse.

Westeros, the continent that serves as both setting and focus for George R.R. Martin's epic series, A Song of Ice and Fire, is full of danger and betrayal, and it holds an incredibly rich and complex history. So far, the series includes *A Game of Thrones*, *A Clash of Kings*, and *A Storm of Swords*, and three more books are planned. *Dragon Magazine* offers a guide to the Westeros story and two possible campaign options. If you are a player or Dungeon Master who enjoys politics, treachery, shifting allegiances, and strategic battles, play the game of thrones as described in the "Clash of Kings" campaign. If you prefer a touch of eldritch horror, snowy death, inhuman foes, and beating the odds in hand-to-hand combat, then consider "The Ice Wall" campaign. Of course, these campaigns need not be separate, and in your game, as in the books themselves, the events of one locale might have consequences that affect events in the other.

WESTEROS SPOILERS

We've done our best to present Westeros as it appears at the end of the third novel in the series without revealing too many of the books' surprises, but there are some spoilers in the articles. You've been warned.

WESTEROS HISTORY, ABRIDGED

Westeros is a world with a rich history and a detailed timeline, but the story boils down to the great families and the factions of supporters that surround them. The ongoing struggle to claim and keep the crown leads to the high turnover of dynastic families, and the land of Westeros has seen three dynasties in recent years: the Targaryens, the Baratheons, and now the Lannisters.

House Targaryen

Player characters in Westeros cannot escape its history. The political alignments entangle everyone no matter how hard they try to avoid them. Both enemies and friends are determined by who you are and whom you follow.

For centuries, the Targaryens ruled the lands of Westeros. Riding dragons from the fallen city of Valyria, the Targaryens destroyed all who opposed them. With fire and blood, they forged the realm of Westeros from seven independent kingdoms. They ruled for centuries, but they became prone to both brilliance and cruelty, primarily due to their tradition of incestuous intermarriages. The last Targaryen king, Aerys II, went further, earning himself the nickname, "The Mad King." Like his ancestors, Aerys III ruled from the Iron Throne in the Red Keep of King's Landing. The Targaryen dragons had died out in previous generations, and without dragons, Aerys's misrule was not tolerated. The lords of Westeros rebelled, and the Targaryen dynasty collapsed.

Creatures that have **passed into legend reawaken to terrorize the world,** and the timing of civil unrest couldn't be worse.

THE KINGSGUARD AND THE KING'S HAND

The Kingsguard is an elite cadre of knights who are sworn to protect the king. Chosen for their skill at arms, noble birth, and desire to serve the king, members of the Kingsguard hold their title for life. The Knights of the Kingsguard can neither marry nor receive title to lands, instead living to serve and protect only the king. As the king's confederates, they can hold a great deal of influence.

Jaime Lannister recently received the title Lord Commander of the Kingsguard, ranking him over the others: Boros Blount, Meryn Trant, Balon Swann, Osmund Kettleblack, Loras Tyrell the "Knight of Flowers," and Arys Oakheart. The Lannisters broke the tradition of life-long service, ejecting the honored Barristan Selmy from the Kingsguard; he now accompanies Daenerys Targaryen.

The king's primary councilor is called the King's Hand. The commoners say, "The king eats, and the Hand takes the shit." More than anyone else, the King's Hand serves as the king's friend, confessor, and advisor—the one man who can tell the king bad news and live to talk about it or subtly steer the fate of entire noble families with a few whispered words in the king's ear. With great power, comes great falls, for many King's Hands are murdered.

The Targaryen heir, Rhaegar, sparked the rebellion by abducting Lyanna, a noblewoman from the Stark family. Her father and brother tried to rescue her, but Aerys caught and murdered both of them. Finally, when Aerys called for the death of Lyanna's youngest brother, Eddard Stark, and his foster brother Robert Baratheon, their foster father, the Lord of the Eyrie, called his banners in revolt rather than yield his charges to the king. Together the Arryns, the Starks, the Tullys, and the Baratheons led a successful revolt against Aerys. At the end, a member of the Kingsguard, Jaime Lannister, slew Aerys, earning himself the nickname "Kingslayer."

The Targaryens are now a dynasty in full retreat; most people think they have died out entirely. Only Aerys' youngest daughter, Daenerys, lives, and she is in hiding in lands far to the east of Westeros. In her absence, Robert Baratheon claimed the crown, uniting contending factions by marrying Cersei Lannister. Ned Stark returned to his keep in the north, with Jon Snow, a bastard he claims as his own.

House Baratheon

After the death of Aerys, things went well for many years. The threat of the Targaryen dragons was gone, but Westeros stayed together. Despite the fears of a few, the realm did not immediately splinter into the kingdoms that had once dotted the landscape. King Robert's charisma kept the lords loyal for a time, but he ruled as little as possible. Instead, he ate, drank, and hunted, and he left the ruling to the Hand of the King, his foster father Jon Arryn, the Lord of the Eyrie.

A Game of Thrones opens when Westeros's peace quietly shatters with the death of the King's Hand, Jon Arryn. King Robert turns to his old friend Eddard Stark to guide the kingdom as the new Hand. Stark receives a report from his sister-in-law, the newly widowed Lady of the Eyrie, that her husband was murdered by the ambitious House Lannister. Although he wishes to remain in his stronghold in the North, Stark knows his duty to the kingdom lies near the throne, uncovering evidence of the crime.

Believing Queen Cersei Lannister's guilt, Stark races to find proof before going to the king. But once he unearths her secret—that her three children are sired not by King Robert but by her twin brother Jaime—he orders her exiled.

Before Eddard can do more, Queen Cersei pounces. She quickly manages the death of King Robert in a hunting "accident," takes over the town guard, declares Eddard Stark guilty of treason, and sets her son Joffrey Baratheon on the throne. With Stark's execution, the North revolts. The unified kingdom divides along the old lines of allegiance, and now, five kings vie for the thrones in Westeros: Baratheon, Lannister, Stark, Greyjoy, and Targaryen, although Daenereys, the Targaryen heir, has not yet come to Westeros.

House Lannister

The strongest current claimants to the throne hail from House Lannister—the children of the late King Robert I Baratheon and Queen Cersei Lannister. But the claim is not as solid as it seems. Recent rumors suggest that the Queen's twin, Jaime, sired the children. Publicly, the Lannisters pretend that this is not true, but privately, the Queen worries. The eldest child, King Joffrey was poisoned at his wedding. The crown then went to Joffrey's younger brother King Tommen, a boy of eight. Their sister, Princess Myrcella, has been sent south to Dorne both for her safety and to buy the support of the Dornish lords. Queen Cersei Lannister reigns as the current Queen Regent and Protector of the Realm for King Tommen.

But other claimants call: Daenerys Targaryen and her dragons for restoration of her Targaryen crown; the Stark family for the north and vengeance against the Lannisters; Stannis Baratheon, King Robert's brother for a crown unsullied by incest; the King of the Iron Island for his old kingdom back. Who will the player characters decide to aid?

THE SECRET WAR

While civil war weakens Westeros, a deeper evil arises from the north. Ancient myths awaken, winter monsters including barrow-wights, giants, and the Others. Few even know these myths through children's stories, and fewer still believe in them. The Night's Watch is hard pressed to defend the kingdom from the threats emerging from the frozen north.

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The Awakening Darkness
THE ICE WALL CAMPAIGN

by Wolfgang Baur and Shelly Baur · Illustrated by David McClellan
based on novels by George R. R. Martin

An evil unnamed stirs beyond a great wall of ice. Few know it exists; fewer still believe it reawakens, seeking dominion over all lands. Its army, creatures of winter, stir in the lands to the far, far north. For now, the Wall holds them back. But if this terrible entity breaches the Wall, the civil wars of men will look like sandbox quarrels, for it will subsume the fire within all living creatures leaving only ice and death to rule the world.

THE WALL

A massive structure of ice and stone, the Wall separates two worlds. To the south lies Westeros; to the north lies the unknown realm of ice creatures and wild tribesmen called the free folk. Built by the First Men in days of legend, the Wall can be climbed or tunneled through, but only with great difficulty. One-hundred leagues long, its height varies from 200 up to 700 feet tall. On top, two can ride abreast even at the wall's narrowest points, and the wall gets wider still near its base. Siege towers cannot be built high enough nor strong enough to break through. Fires die when the ice melts onto them. Besides the innate protection of the Wall's immense size and scale, the builders wove spells into its structure. The Wall can be flanked on the eastern side by boats in the Bay of Seals, or by going up the Gorge around the Shadow Tower. Well-guarded tunnels with numerous iron gates full of murder holes pass through the Wall. Tunnelers often get trapped inside as have those who tried to travel through the natural ice caves underneath.

Regular patrols of two rangers and two builders ride mules along the top of the Wall or near its base. Their resources stretched impossibly thin, the men of the Night's Watch, sworn to protect the Wall from invasion, keep a constant vigil despite their dwindling numbers. This slow but steady erosion of the Watch's numbers causes alarm in the North, but their requests for help have gone unheeded by most of the southern nobility.

The Night's Watch

In return for a life-long oath of service and celibacy, the Night's Watch offers immunity from previous crimes, bed and board, and years of tedium relieved by occasional bouts of fighting. Besides felons, the Watch also takes in runaways, bastards, and other soldiers who have nowhere to turn. Men of the watch wear all black including their ring mail; this makes them easier to find if they turn oathbreaker.

Those who break the oath forfeit their lives; they become outlaws, and such turncoats are executed when caught. Those who escape usually go to live north of the Wall, among the free folk.

Three orders serve under a Lord Commander: the Stewards led by the Lord Steward Bowen Marsh, the Builders led by First Builder Othell Yarwyck, and the Rangers led by a First Ranger. Men are placed in one of the orders, and all are trained to fight. Long ago, men of the watch garrisoned all seventeen keeps along the wall. Now the whole order numbers fewer than one thousand troops, and only three keeps are occupied: Castle Black, Eastwatch-by-the-Sea, and the Shadow Tower.

Until recently, Lord Commander Mormont governed the few soldiers and dwindling manpower as best he could, but knew that the watch would fail if the southerners didn't send him reinforcements. Rather than die behind his Wall, Mormont led the largest recent sortie north of the Wall to figure out how to best deal with the problems of the walking dead and the free folk army.

JON SNOW: The Stark Bastard

Male human Fighter 2/Ranger 3/Ranger of the Night's Watch 2: CR 7; Size M (5 ft., 11 in.); HD 2d10+4 plus 3d10+6 plus 2d10+4; hp 52; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Atk +10 melee (1d10+2 *+1 Valyrian steel bastardsword*/crit 19-20), +9 ranged (1d8 longbow/crit x3); SV Fort +11, Ref +3, Will +2; AL LG; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4*, Hide +9*, Listen +11, Move Silently +10*, Ride +13, Spot +11, Wilderness Lore +11; Alertness, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Fortitude, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Track.

*Includes Armor Check Penalty

Favored Enemy: Undead

Possessions: +1 Valyrian steel bastard sword (Longclaw), dire wolf (Ghost), black robes, camping gear, masterwork chain shirt.

With dark grey, sharp eyes, Jon Snow (16) is slender and quick rather than brutally strong. Although not a knight, he trained as one with Robb Stark, and follows a knight's creed to honor and protect. In battle, he wears an iron helm and black ringmail over boiled leather and wool. He can handle dirk and dagger for close-range fighting, and shoot a long bow for ranged fights. Raised with the other Stark children, no one really knows who his parents are, but Eddard Stark acknowledges him as a bastard child.

He volunteered to join the Night's Watch following family tradition; his uncle is also a member, and bastards tend to lack other options. A determined fighter and good leader, Jon sees himself as a defender of both the North and the wider realm.

Jon carries Longclaw, a bastard sword made of Valyrian steel and given to Jon by Lord Mormont, Lord Commander of the Night's Watch. Longclaw joins one of approximately two hundred Valyrian swords existing in Westeros, each of them passed down as great treasures. Rumors claim thousands more exist across the sea, where Daenerys Targaryen lives. More than just excellent weapons, Valyrian blades are status symbols. Because of their strength and their rarity, they are treasured by the noble houses, even those that have fallen into poverty, and coveted by the newer houses that lack them.

Valyrian steel swords usually are dark like smoke, light weight, and able to keep an edge extremely well. While Valyrian steel can be reworked, no one knows how to make it anew, for the spells woven into their forging have been lost.

The Keeps

The seventeen keeps of the Wall lie mostly abandoned. Of the three still occupied, the commander's headquarters, Castle Black, is both the strongest keep and boasts the largest garrison. Eastwatch and Shadow Tower flank the two ends of the Wall. The total strength of the keeps remains below a thousand men-at-arms.

The abandoned keeps include Nightfort, the site of the Black Gate. By speaking his vow, a sworn brother of Night's Watch can open this gate between the two sides of the Wall. It leads through a glowing white weirwood tree into the lands beyond.

Mole Town

Just south of Castle Black lies the small civilian community of Mole Town. This settlement stands three-quarters underground, the better to insulate it during the harsh winters of the North. It exists only to supply the Night's Watch with both legitimate goods and illegitimate services.

Night's Watch Ranger

The guardians of the Wall call themselves the Night's Watch, saying that they have "taken the black." They protect humanity from the creatures of the wilderness and the deep winter, creatures such as giants, ogres, and wights. In return, all of their past crimes, no matter how vile, are forgiven. The Night's Watch only accepts men into its ranks.

Although all the men of the Night's Watch stand guard against the threats from the north, it is the rangers of the watch that face many of the toughest duties. Expected to be a mounted soldier, a solitary scout, a huntsman, and even a spy, it is a ranger who undertakes the most dangerous sorties and missions into the wilds of the north. Although every man of the watch takes the oath and takes the black, only the best outdoorsmen and warriors become rangers.

Class Features

The following are all class features of the Ranger of the Night's Watch prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Rangers of the Night's Watch gain proficiency with all simple and martial weapons, light and medium armors, and shields.

Withstand Cold (Ex): Brothers of Night's Watch know how to avoid frostbite and hypothermia. They gain a +4 competence bonus to saving throws involving magical or normal cold.

Great Fortitude: The brother of Night's Watch gains the Great Fortitude feat as a bonus feat.

Woodland Stride (Ex): *Starting at* 3rd level, a ranger of the Night's Watch may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect the character.

Swift Tracking: Beginning at 4th level, the ranger of the Night's Watch can move at normal speed while following tracks without suffering the normal -5 penalty, and suffers only a -10 penalty when moving at up to twice normal speed while tracking (instead of the normal -20 penalty).

Leadership: All brothers of Night's Watch gain Leadership as a bonus feat at this level. If they already have the feat, they gain a +2 bonus to their Leadership score.

THE OATH OF THE NIGHT'S WATCH

"Night gathers, and now my watch begins. It shall not end until my death. I shall take no wife, hold no lands, father no children. I shall wear no crowns and win no glory. I shall live and die at my post. I am the sword in the darkness. I am the watcher on the walls. I am the fire that burns against the cold, the light that brings the dawn, the horn that wakes the sleepers, the shield that guards the realms of men. I pledge my life and honor to the Night's Watch, for this night and all nights to come."

THE STARKS OF WINTERFELL

A lordly family for 8,000 years, Stark blood helped build and defend the Wall. The Stark motto, "Winter is Coming" reflects what the world brings them. The family claims to be descended from the First Men (an ancient race of men who settled Westeros before the fall of Valyria), and certainly the epics

and ancient tales of the North deeply intertwine with Stark history. But a new era comes; the Starks found a litter of direwolves, one for each Stark child. Two wolves have died, but the remaining Stark children with wolves have established a mystical bond with them, seeing through their eyes and occasionally having prophetic dreams.

All six Stark children had protective direwolves, creatures larger than ponies with bright yellow eyes. The wise believe these direwolves to be a gift from the Old Gods of the north. Jon Snow's white direwolf, Ghost, is eerily quite. The two roam the Wall and the north together, sharing a bond that unnerves some of the other rangers.

Rickon, Brandon (Bran), Arya, and Jon seem to be developing tenuous mystical links to their wolves, seeing through their eyes and hearing what they hear. People refer to those with the abilities the children seem to be developing as wargs, skinchangers, or beastlings.

RANGER OF THE NIGHT'S WATCH
Prerequisites

HIT DIE D8

To become a ranger of the Night's Watch, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Knowledge (local—the Ice Wall): 4 ranks.

Ride: 6 ranks.

Feat: Endurance.

Special: Take the oath of the Night's Watch (see the Oath of the Night's Watch sidebar for details), follow its restrictions, and remain obedient to the officers of the Night's Watch and their orders.

RANGER OF THE NIGHT'S WATCH
Class Skills

The night's watch class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Str: Climb, Jump, Swim.

Dex: Hide, Move Silently, Ride.

Con: –

Int: Craft, Knowledge (local—the Wall), Knowledge (nature), Profession.

Wis: Heal, Intuit Direction, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, Wilderness Lore.

Cha: Bluff, Handle Animal, Intimidate.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Nine-year-old Bran Stark (1st-level druid/1st-level aristocrat) loved climbing the rooftops of his home, Winterfell, until he saw something he shouldn't have and suffered a terrible fall because of it.

> "On the Wall, **we are all one house**."
>
> —Lord Mormont

The fall from the tower, didn't kill Bran, but the young man was paralyzed, and this brush with death awakened the gift of prophecy, called Green Dreams. With paralysis, his hope for knighthood died, but he still aims for lordly courtesies as the lawful heir to Winterfell. Fleeing Winterfell before its fall, he went north through the Wall to try to unlock his powers. Accompanying Bran are the young crannogmen Jojen (3rd-level druid) and his sister Meera Reed (2nd-level ranger). Meera's wilderness survival skills and Jojen's prophesies help Bran remain alive. Because of this strange background, players could encounter Bran nearly anywhere in the north, and aiding the young noble's journey into the northlands could be a campaign in itself.

The Magic of the North

As the story of Westeros progresses, more and more of the strange magic of the woodlands comes to light. Perhaps the most intriguing expressions of this magic are the greenseers, wise men and women who have strange nature-related powers. Their visions are strongest when guided by their totem animals or familiars—in the case of the Stark children, these are the direwolves, but others with the sight are bonded to elk, deer, dogs, hawks, and so on.

Weirwood trees have white bark and dark red leaves. Some, called heart trees, sport carved faces that bleed red sap from the eyes. Northern holds like Winterfell still have a stand of weirwoods with a heart tree, collectively called a godswood. As part of the oldest religion of Westeros, the white trees are held sacred by all the races of the north and families like the Starks. The priests of the Seven, newer gods of the south, have cut down most of the weirwoods south of the Neck. The exception being the Isle of Faces, which boasts a large weirwood stand possessing much mystical power. Some southern holds have godswoods of regular trees, such as King's Landing. The learned debate whether such godswoods retain their power without a heart tree of weirwood.

The greatest greenseers can see through the eyes of weirwoods. Northmen who follow the old ways speak their binding oaths before a heart tree, which they believe can detect lies. Typical examples of these vows include the oaths of marriage, and the oath of the Night's Watch.

KING STANNIS I BARATHEON

[Although we've done our best to avoid spoilers throughout this text, many have been unavoidable. Despite these efforts, there are major spoilers in the following section. –Ed.]

After leading a sortie beyond the wall to confront the free folk and whatever other menaces lurked in the north, Lord Mormont and the men of

RANGER OF THE NIGHT'S WATCH
Advancement

Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Withstand cold
2	+2	+3	+0	+0	Great Fortitude
3	+3	+3	+1	+1	Woodland stride
4	+4	+4	+1	+1	Swift tracking
5	+5	+4	+1	+1	Leadership

> "And Joramun blew the Horn of Winter, and **woke giants from the earth**."
>
> — Legend of the North

MELISANDRE, RED PRIESTESS OF R'HLLOR

Female human cleric 9; CR 9; Size M (5 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 9d8; hp 44; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 10; Attack +7/+2 melee (1d4 dagger/crit 19-20); SA turn undead, rebuke fire creatures, turn water creatures; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +11; AL LE; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Spellcraft +13; Iron Will, Spell Penetration, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion])

Domains: Fire, Law

Spells (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; base save DC 13 + spell level): 0–*detect magic* (x2), *detect poison, light, purify food and drink, virtue;* 1st–*bless* (x2), *burning hands*, command, doom, sanctuary;* 2nd–*aid, augury, darkness, hold person, produce flame*;* 3rd–*continual flame, dispel magic, prayer, resist elements;* 4th–*divination, neutralize poison, wall of fire*;* 5th–*fire shield*, summon shadows.*

*Indicates a domain spell

Possessions: red robes, masterwork dagger.

Some find Melisandre's heart-shaped face, womanly body, and red glowing eyes comely. She wears red dresses, keeping a ruby jewel about her neck.

Stannis relies on the power of Melisandre, the Red Priestess, adopting on his banner the heart sign of her god, R'hllor. She gave him a flaming sword, Lightbringer, named after a legendary sword. Priestly PCs would do well choosing R'hllor and working (at least at some point) with Melisandre. PCs who want to play in both campaigns could follow Stannis' banner in the north and the south.

the Night's Watch were attacked by creatures of ice. Faced with a foe beyond his understanding, Mormont retreated. Before regaining the Wall, some of his men led a mutiny, slaying Mormont and forcing the few remaining loyalists to hasten back to Castle Black.

When the free folk reached the wall, they found it held by fewer than even the skeletal numbers normally stationed at Castle Black. As Jon Snow and the rest of the Wall's rag-tag defenders seemed lost, a new host of defenders, led by King Stannis Baratheon arrived to scatter the great host of free folk and bolster the Wall's defenses.

After years of hoping for reinforcements to bolster their ranks, Stannis fulfilled the wishes of the Night's Watch beyond anyone's expectations. He feels the burden of protecting the North from the evil ice creatures fell to him as the rightful king of the realm. The other kings squabble among themselves further south.

Since arriving, Stannis fought a major engagement with the free folk, defeating this army of barbarian humans and giants despite their battering ram and siege equipment (used on the tunnels, not the wall itself).

Only Mance Rayder kept that free folk army together, adhering seigecraft and strategy to the free folk's courage and strength. With Mance captured by Stannis, the free folk fractured into undisciplined tribes. Melisandre, a Red Priestess, guides Stannis' choices, lending her power and charisma to his army.

Religion in the North

The people of Westeros follow three faiths. The south generally worships the Seven. Crystals and light figure into their services. Most southern holds have a septon (priest), and genteel young ladies get trained by septa (nuns).

The Northlands still worship the old gods, nameless and wild. Where sacking a sept yields gold, gems, and relics, sacking the sacred woods of the old gods yields nothing but timber.

As the days grow colder and bleaker, people turn toward the newcomer from across the sea–R'hllor, Lord of Light, God of Flame and Shadow. R'hllor's priests demonstrate their powers by raising the dead, scrying in flames, birthing shadow monsters, and creating flaming swords. Their most powerful magics require at least blood if not death, especially from kings or their offspring. The original Lightbringer (not King Stannis' sword) was tempered in the dying body of the maker's beloved wife. Legends speak of a new hero, wielding the remade Lightbringer, on whom the fate of the world rests. Stannis could be the one, but doubts remain.

BEYOND THE WALL

Generally, no lord or king holds sway in the wild territories beyond the wall. Only wild tribesmen called free folk, hardy beasts, and creatures of legend live there.

These free folk, or wildlings, are nomadic tribesmen who claim independence from Westeros. Different families beyond the Wall operate as independent clans: They are brave, surviving with only primitive weapons in the harshest conditions. Most wildlings are born beyond the wall, but a few outlaws come from the south. With cold and hunger as constant threats, the free folk live off of hunting and animal husbandry rather than crops. Their independence leads to chaos when fielding armies. Only the most charismatic leaders who earn the free folk's respect can command them. So far, they have never succeeded in breaching the Wall despite many generations of trying. Most wildlings become barbarians, druids, or rangers.

In addition to the free folk, the forests, tundra, glaciers, and mountains house older races like giants, wights, and the Others. The children of the forest, creatures of legend that are somehow connected to the weirwood trees, are rumored to live here too. None know much about them except that they possess forest magic with links to the weirwoods. Creatures PCs will find north of the Wall include direwolves, enormous elk, snow bears, aurochs, eagles, and huge mammoths.

Now that King Stannis and the Night's Watch have broken the gathered strength of the wildlings under Mance Rayder the King Beyond the Wall, the fortunes of the free folk could run in nearly any direction. Perhaps the threat of the Others will unite the two sides; perhaps the Wall will be

overrun before the experiment can be tried. The PCs can help reconcile these two cultures.

Mance dresses like a barbarian wildling rather than a king. He is a man of middle height with brown eyes and long brown hair cut with grey. His wife died bearing their newborn son (yet unnamed). Mance can talk even the most stubborn of the free folk into cooperating with him, and used this gift to build an army of wildlings and giants. He abandoned his oaths and fled from the Night's Watch because he wanted "freedom to choose" – he would rather be a starving outlaw than a well-fed and respected member of society.

Mance spent many years learning the stories of the North that enabled him to find the Horn of Winter and more long years to bring an army together. As much as anyone, he knows the history, songs, and stories of the North and beyond the Wall. Like the bards of old, he snuck south of the Wall to ply tunes, even going into Winterfell. He is trustworthy, resourceful, and knows the tricks that others might play on him. But Stannis defeated his army, capturing Mance. Stannis's priestess means to burn Mance, since she needs the blood of kings as a powerful component of her magic. Barbarian PCs could try to rescue him from the pyre.

BARROW-WIGHTS, GIANTS, AND THE OTHERS

To most people, creatures like giants are tall tales told by nannies; only children and fools believe them. Those who have been to the Wall and beyond know they really exist. Riding mammoths, the giants came with the wildlings as part of Mance Rayder's army. Like the Free Folk, the giants are being hunted by darker creatures of the cold—the wights and the Others.

Mance Rayder and the wildlings dug through many ancient gravesites seeking—and eventually finding—the Horn of Winter. Made to giant proportions, it is fully 8 feet along its curve, a black horn banded with gold. Legends say blowing it will bring down the Wall, heralding the end of the world. Mance's wife persuaded him that bringing down the Wall would be too dangerous, since the wildlings want to have the Wall protect them from the Others and wights. As she said, "sorcery is a sword without a hilt. There is no safe way to grasp it." So Mance choose battle to try to get the wildlings on the southern side of the Wall. After his capture, Stannis Baratheon claimed the horn.

Since the battle, the threat from inhuman sources has grown worse. Wights and the Others terrify living creatures. Wights are undead, with some intelligence and a lust only for killing. They do not give quarter and do not negotiate. Fire is the only effective weapons against them. The wise recommend burning the dead immediately rather than risk them becoming wights. So far, the wights have stayed beyond the Wall unless someone brings their bodies over.

If white and cold had a sound, it would be the sound of the Others. Tall and scrawny as old bones, they are silent warriors whose armor changes color, shifting as they move. They carry long swords of unknown metal, a thin crystal of shimmering blue that cuts through ring mail and shatters steel swords. Their eyes are the deep blue of ice. When hit with obsidian, the Others and their gear melt away quickly. Neither Mance Rayder nor the oldest storytellers know more about the Others or exactly why they are rising again. Both the legends and the priests of R'hllor believe an Ice Lord lives in the farthest north, whose rising relates to the Others and the wights.

> "A man of the Night's Watch **lives his life for the realm**."
>
> —Lord Mormont

MONSTER EQUIVALENTS

Although most of the foes the players square off against in a Westeros campaign will be other humans, there are a few animals and monsters in the setting that are dangerous enough to threaten adventurers. The following list provides a D&D equivalent for some of the monsters from the setting. Although these monsters might differ cosmetically from their Westeros counterparts, the Hit Dice, size, and other statistics are good representations of the creatures' abilities.

Westeros	D&D Equivalent
Direwolf	Dire wolf
Mammoth	Dire elephant
Shadowcat	Dire lion
Dragon	Young red dragon
Wight	Wight*

*Westeros wights have regeneration 8 and treat all damage except for fire damage as subdual damage. In addition, double all fire damage dealt to the wight.

ICE WALL ADVENTURES

The North can be used as the basis of a number adventures or campaigns. The following ideas might serve as the basis for a single adventure or as a seed for an entire campaign.

Barbarian PCs might seek to travel through the northern lands, avoid the increasingly dangerous creatures emerging from the north, and make their way to the other side of the wall, struggling against the Night's Watch all the while.

The adventurers could join the Night's Watch as rangers. As members of Night's Watch, they would battle the wights and the Others, seek to oppose the free folk and other raiders from the north, and seek aid from the warring the kings in the south. Their deeds birth new stories and new heroes. They might also become involved in the settling of the free folk, or come into conflict with Stannis' orders.

The adventurers might be Stark loyalists, seeking the Stark bastard Jon Snow, helping to bolster the garrison of the wall, or ranging far to the north looking for Bran and his companions.

The Horn of Winter was found in the north, perhaps other treasures, items, or beings of power lie sheltered in the great northern forests.

The Clash of Kings

THE ROYAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE THRONE OF WESTEROS

by Wolfgang and Shelly Baur
based on novels by George R. R. Martin

In a land torn apart by civil war, everyone can rally around a cause and stake a claim to land and glory. With no rightful heir and large armies of hungry soldiers and lawless bandits roaming the countryside, everyone hopes for a bit of peace and security. That hope grows ever more elusive as great armies clash and plunder the countryside, as each noble family tries to gauge the winds and choose the winning side, heaping betrayal upon betrayal. Reconciliation is a dream; the bards sing of revenge or glory, not peace.

Five major contenders have come forward to claim the throne in the name of their own ancient bloodlines. The Clash of Kings campaign revolves around these claimants and offers players plenty of combat, intrigue, and a wide variety of causes to fight and die for. Five kings seek to rule: the Lannisters, Starks, Baratheons, Greyjoys, and the Targaryens (although the Targaryen claimant has not yet returned to Westeros).

THE LANNISTERS

Arguably the most powerful faction in Westeros, the Lannister family holds King's Landing, the capital of the realm, and the powerful city of Lannisport, along with the mighty Casterly Rock.

History: Led by the eight-year-old King Tommen and his mother, Queen Cersei (12th-level aristocrat), the Lannisters control the southern portion of the kingdom, including the capital, King's Landing. Their motto, "Hear me roar," sums up both their pride and their ambition.

Queen Cersei leads the most prominent faction. Her physical beauty gives her a way to manipulate most men, and she strives to maintain that hold. She prefers beautiful people who understand the harsh realities of politics. She holds the reins of power, but her ambition might yet undo her.

Her brother, Tyrion, equals Cersei as an astute politician, a spy, and a noble. Caught in the middle is Cersei's twin and lover, Jaime (16th-level fighter), who cares for both of his siblings. Like his sister, he has silky golden hair and green eyes. As Lord Commander of the Kingsguard, conscious of the great Lord Commanders he follows, Jaime Lannister seems to be taking his duties to heart.

Power and Claims: In battle, the Lannisters can field at least one large, seasoned host, and their financial might gives them the ability to begin raising a new host when they expect prolonged warfare. House Lannister buys the loyalty of noble houses as well as mercenary armies. To date, the Lannister's wealth has destroyed many foes, but an army whose loyalty is bought is fickle, and most mercenaries surrender rather than fighting to the last.

Most of the royal fleet burned during recent fighting, so the Lannisters count on commanding the equally large fleet owned by their ally, the Lord of the Arbor. Only the Iron Island fleet rivals the Lannisters' in size.

Goals: Both Cersei and Jaime Lannister support young King Tommen. They seek to reclaim the central riverlands from outlaw bands, eliminate King Stannis Baratheon as a claimant for the throne, retake the Iron Islands from the Greyjoys, and consolidate power over their allies. They might know of Daenerys Targaryen's plans to invade Westeros (their spies are everywhere), and seek to assassinate her. Any of the other claimants would gladly see the Lannisters dead and would reward the killers.

Lannister Adventure Seeds

Retaking Westeros requires keeping the Lannister allies together, as well as battlefield successes in the Iron Islands and the central riverlands. Any of the following ideas might work for adventures involving House Lannister.

Hunt Bandits: There are dangerous and lawless areas left in the wake of the warfare that has torn through Westeros. Restoring order involves hunting outlaws in the riverlands

around the Trident. PCs could infiltrate one of the outlaw bands, perhaps working as double agents. Emphasize both the Kingsroad, which the Lannisters need to restart trade, and the Trident River, which alternately floods and freezes during the winter.

Soldiers of Fortune: More than many other houses, the Lannisters employ mercenaries. The PCs could be part of a free company in the service of the house, allowing them to interact with many of the setting's significant NPCs, see much of the countryside between King's Landing and the Trident, and feel the effects of the political turmoil that plagues Westeros.

Courtly Maneuvering: DMs can also add courtly activities such as tournaments, plotting for advancement, and matchmaking. Weddings and funerals occur frequently, and they can be used to show off the shifts in power in the kingdom, by the selection of who dines at the high table with the Lannisters, who sits in the high hall of King's Landing, and who is banished to the outer hall with the lesser lords. Birth is the best way to guarantee position, but advancement through deeds happens fast during wartime.

Lannister Bannermen

The following individuals and minor houses are allied with House Lannister.

The Cleganes: A newly ennobled house, the Cleganes do whatever dirty work the Lannisters want done without the Lannister name attached. Gregor (13th-level fighter), nicknamed "The Mountain That Rides" for his 8-foot size, inherited the lordship. His hobbies include rape, plunder, and pillage. Gregor's mortal enemy and brother, Sandor (14th-level fighter), functioned as the personal bodyguard of the Lannisters until he fled during battle. Last seen in the river lands, people recognize Sandor's scarred face on sight.

House Frey: Old Lord Frey (4th-level aristocrat/4th-level fighter) sired enough lordlings and bastards to command a small but strategically located army of 4,000, which includes 1,000 horsemen. The Frey stronghold, called The Twins, guards an important crossing on the Trident, and the outcome of strife between the north and south depends in part on who controls The Twins. The Lannisters know House Frey could switch allegiance again, especially for an advantageous marriage for one of Lord Frey's many offspring

House Martell: The Martell motto, "Unbound, Unbent, Unbroken," reflects their independence, war prowess, and pride in their land of Dorne. To win their allegiance, the Lannisters sent Princess Myrcella Baratheon (Cersei's daughter) to the Martells as a ward, making the princess the focus of a dangerous power struggle. Sending the girl to Dorne was the only way to secure the alliance with the Martells, but ironically Myrcella could become an excuse for the Martells to seize the

Illustrated by Dave McClellan

TYRION LANNISTER

Male human Aristocrat 6/Fighter 5: CR 10; Size M (4 ft.); HD 6d8+12 plus 5d10+10; hp 76; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21; Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+1 masterwork heavy mace) or +14 ranged (1d10+2 masterwork heavy crossbow/crit 19-20); SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +9; AL LN; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 14 , Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +5, Forgery +8, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +7, Innuendo +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (History) +9, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +9, Listen +7, Ride +13, Sense Motive +8, Spot +7; Expertise, Improved Initiative, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Trample, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Specialization (heavy crossbow).

Possessions: Full plate, large steel shield, Masterwork heavy crossbow, masterwork heavy mace, 500 gp, traveling clothes, noble's clothes, dagger, *+1 ring of protection* (Lannister seal ring)

People instantly recognize Tyrion by his mismatched eyes, his black and gold hair, and his extremely short size—just over four feet high. In battle, he acquitted himself reasonably well, fighting bravely if not with outstanding skill. In fact, he lost his nose and acquired a large facial scar defending the Lannister cause. As Tyrion describes himself, "I am generous. Loyal to those who are loyal to me. I've proven I'm not craven. And I am cleverer than most, surely wits count for something. I can even be kind."

Tyrion has taken the popular saying, "A Lannister always pays his debts," deeply to heart. He has many scores to settle, and welcomes adventurers willing to help him. However, he is both cautious and clever—not an easy man to fool.

Tyrion wants to take Cercei down. He'd like to keep his nephew, King Tommen, on the throne. He thinks he is clever enough to achieve both goals. He will hire just about anyone on promised treasure that he will do his best to deliver. Additionally, he wants to know who really murdered his late nephew, because he is being blamed for it. Finally, he wants to know where his wife Sansa Stark has run off to.

throne, because they include women in the line of succession. In their eyes, Myrcella, the eldest, should inherit instead of her brother King Tommen. The Lannisters and Martells are uneasy allies at best.

House Tyrell. With the riches of Highgarden and Oldtown, House Tyrell can raise a huge army of swordsmen, including many of the kingdom's best knights. People call the family matriarch, Lady Olenna (7th-level aristocrat/5th-level rogue), the Queen of Thorns. She manipulates events as masterfully as Queen Cersei, but suffers none of the younger woman's impetuous nature. Olenna seems to have plans for many contingencies, and any who plot for power in Westeros will eventually have to content with her and her powerful family.

Stronghold: King's Landing

King's Landing is one of the largest cities in Westeros. Urban-oriented PCs like rogues and alchemists are likely to live here. Any serious contenders for the throne will have to capture the city and root out the Lannisters. Walls protect this city, but a large army could win through by breaching one of the seven gates.

In addition to its walls, the city defenses also include the fast-flowing Blackwater Rush on the southern side. An iron chain between two winch towers can be raised to block ships from either entering or leaving, and underwater rocks make a naval attack from Blackwater Bay unlikely.

The royal household and many of the nobility live in the Red Keep atop one of the city's small hills. Secret passages abound in the keep and many of the city's older buildings. Those below the kitchens lead to the cellar where dragon skulls dating to the time of Targaryen rule sit in storage. Four levels of dungeons house criminals. The Kingsguard, including Jaime Lannister, live in the four-storied White Sword Tower. Cersei and King Tommen live in the inner keep, called Maegor's Holdfast. Surrounded by a dry moat, bridges connect Maegor's Holdfast to the rest of the Red Keep.

Atop another hill sits the Great Sept of Baelor (the grand church of King's Landing), adorned with seven crystal towers. Noble and royal weddings and funerals take place here, as well as the occasional riot.

A third hill houses the decrepit Dragonpit, where dragons were kept in a domed coliseum by the Targaryens. Additionally, the usual establishments like brothels, inns, and the like can be found in King's Landing. The worst of anything can be found in Flea Bottom, the slums and poor quarter of the city.

Led by the charismatic Addam Marbrand (8th-level fighter), the City Guard numbers just over four thousand men. Undisciplined, they might break during any battle if the conflict turns against them. Their allegiance goes to the highest bidder.

The Alchemist's Guild in King's Landing is an important part of the city's resources, and their wildfire mixture is a potent weapon in warfare. Besides making wildfire, they also transmute metals, conjure flame monsters, and practice flame-driven magic.

In addition to King's Landing, the Lannisters hold Casterly Rock, their ancestral home, a nearly impregnable fortress carved inside a single massive rock that towers over the city of Lannisport. If the Lannisters lose King's Landing, expect them to retreat here.

KING STANNIS I BARATHEON

One of the most determined adversaries of the Lannisters is Stannis Baratheon, who, along with Jon Arryn, discovered that King Robert was not the father of Cersei Lannister's children. According to the laws of the kingdom, Stannis Baratheon is the rightful king of Westeros, but that claim rests on evidence of Cersei and Jaime Lannister's incestuous relationship becoming proven fact.

History: Because King Robert died without lawful issue, the Baratheon claim falls to his younger brother Stannis. When Stannis failed to seize the capital, King's Landing, most of his original supporters left him for the Lannisters. So he retreated to his hold on Dragonstone Island. Stannis feels strongly that true kings don't just hold tournaments and plot for power like the Lannister pretenders do. Little of Stannis's recent history has escaped the influence of his most noteworthy follower, the priestess Melisandre.

Power and Claims: Stannis Baratheon's well-disciplined, fanatical army includes 5,000 men-at-arms and 400 mounted knights. His priestess, Melisandre (cleric 9), wields much

godly power. Religious fervor helps him recruit men without paying gold. These fanatics will go berserk as needed, their fury sustaining them until Melisandre dies or yields.

Stannis's allies also command a small fleet of ships led by the ex-smuggler Davos Seaworth. Best utilized in coastal campaigns around Dragonstone Island, they would also be useful if Stannis tries to take King's Landing again.

Baratheon Adventure Seeds

Intrigue and battle surround Stannis as he struggles to wrest what he sees as his rightful kingdom away from the usurpers that clamor for the throne. Any of the following ideas might be the focus of a campaign or a single adventure involving Stannis and his followers.

Destroy the Lannisters: Strife with the Lannisters is a fact of life for Stannis and his bannermen. Agents, friends, and mercenaries seeking to attract the patronage of the powerful king could be involved in any number of missions and intrigues against Queen Cersei and her allies.

Defend Dragonstone: Stannis's enemies are numerous, and no one knows when he might have to defend his hold on Dragonstone.

Break a Siege: More conflict is sure to come in the war-torn lands of the seven kingdoms, and followers of the principled Stannis Baratheon are as likely as any to see combat.

Matchmaking: Noble children are important pawns in the game of thrones, and Stannis' young daughter, Shireen, is an important target and resource of Stannis's enemies and allies alike. Protecting Shireen is just one of the many adventures that might involve the young girl.

> "Only death can pay for life, my lord. **A great gift requires great sacrifice.**"
>
> —Melisandre of Asshai

Baratheon Bannermen

The following noteworthy individuals owe allegiance to House Baratheon.

The Onion Knight, Davos Seaworth (rogue 7): Once a smuggler, he saved Stannis' Dragonstone Island by bringing in food during a siege. By proving loyalty and resourcefulness, he's been elevated to Hand of the King. Left to guard Dragonstone while Stannis fights at the Ice Wall, visiting PCs will find him a approachable source of news.

Salladhor Saan (5th-level fighter/5th-level rogue): A merchant prince riding his flagship the *Valyrian* around the Narrow Sea, Salladhor is not exactly reputable. But Stannis needs his ships, men, and the supplies they bring. Sea adventurers find a perfect friend in Salladhor—a man willing to share booty taken from Stannis's foes. He can help PCs who want to adventure in and around Dragonstone.

Melisandre of Asshai: Using fire magic, Melisandre, a priestess of R'hllor, God of Flame and Shadow, can scry the future, probe minds, breed shadows that kill, and create weapons of light and fire.

Stronghold: Dragonstone Island

The island arose from the active Dragonmount volcano whose cone sits just beyond the keep. Secret stairs lead into the heart of the volcano. The Targaryens used Dragonstone as their hold while conquering Westeros. Taking the hold without dragons would prove extremely difficult, requiring inside help or powerful magic. A flotilla laying siege can expect a long wait, and their cordon can be broken by smugglers. Hundreds of gargoyles ring the castle walls. Some rumors claim a stone dragon somewhere on the island will awaken for the rightful king, others say that all the gargoyles will rise.

THE MASTER OF COIN

Some petty lords do pull themselves up by their bootstraps; Lord Petyr Baelish (2nd-level aristocrat/5th-level rogue) is one such man. He rose from the lowly birthplace of a ramshackle tower on The Fingers to master money handler for the crown, and now stands upon the brink of becoming one of the kingdom's most powerful nobles. Besides manipulating money, he manipulates men. Blame for his lies and assassinations has always been assigned elsewhere. The PCs would be convenient scapegoats as Petyr unfolds his new schemes. PCs can recognize Lord Baelish by his short stature, pointed beard, and grey-green eyes.

Lord Baelish chose to marry the Lady of the Eyrie, moving to her hold, the Eyrie, the ancestral holding of the Arryn family. The keep sits atop a mountain reachable only by a narrow, steep staircase—making the Eyrie formidable in defense. Fierce clansmen raid the pass to its doors, making arrivals and departures difficult without a large force.

SANDOR CLEGANE, "THE HOUND"

Male human Fighter 14; CR 14; Size M (5 ft., 9 in.); HD 14d10+28; hp 105; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flatfooted 13; Attack +18/+13 melee (1d10+7 bastard sword/crit 19-20); SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +6; AL N; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Jump +13, Handle Animal +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Listen +4, Ride +14, Move silently +8, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4; Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride By Attack, Trample, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: Visor fashioned like snarling dog, masterwork studded leather, bastard sword, 5 gp.

Most nobles don't refer to Sandor by his real name; they just call him "The Hound," a nickname he has earned for both his loyalty and his family's background as the Lannister kennel masters. Burned by his brother, Gregor, Sandor's face is hideously deformed on the left side. The Hound's fear of fire led him to recently desert the Lannisters during a battle at King's Landing. Now he has become a sell sword, The Hound lies wounded, possibly dying, in the riverlands near the Trident. Although not a good man, he helped both of Ned Stark's girls. He thinks of himself as a realist who recognizes power through swords.

"The best we can hope for is **to die with swords in our hands**."

—Jaime Lannister

KING STANNIS I BARATHEON

Male human paladin 10: CR 10; Size M (6 ft.); HD 10d10+30; hp 85; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+5 +2 *longsword*/crit 19-20); SQ *lay on hands, detect evil,* divine grace, divine health, aura of courage, smite evil, *remove disease* 3/week, turn undead; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +7; AL LG; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +13, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +9, Ride +13; Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword).

Spells (2/1; base save DC = 11 + spell level): 1st—*bless, cure light wounds;* 2nd—*delay poison.*

Possessions: Lightbringer, +2 longsword (Lightbringer is a blade of prophecy, and might have as yet unrevealed powers), full plate, large steel shield.

Stannis does what he believes he must for duty's sake, not swerving even for his own desires. A hard man to please, Stannis cannot be bribed, cajoled, or wheedled into doing anything but his duty. Some of his followers admire his devotion to principle; others consider it a diplomatic and strategic nightmare. But as long as Stannis convinced he is right, he will continue to fight for and defend his crown and kingdom. Already, he has put the needs of the realm above his own.

Stannis's sword, Lightbringer, may be the fulfillment of a prophecy, the sword of a true king. Melisandre created it, but some doubt whether it is the true Lightbringer, or whether it just bears the name.

Note: As with all magic and spells presented in this article, Stannis's paladin abilities are not an exact replicas of the character's abilities in the novels. See the Magic in Westeros sidebar for more details.

THE TARGARYEN HEIR

Although not yet in Westeros, Daenerys Targaryen continues to grow in wisdom, power, and the desire to claim the kingdom as her birthright.

History: Daughter of mad King Aerys I, Daenerys' claim arises from the Targaryen kings who ruled before the Baratheon "usurpers" took over. She has been married, widowed, betrayed, and forced to grow up beyond her 15 years. After assembling an army, she took several free cities on the eastern continent. After capturing the city-state Meereen, she decided to stay, learning how to rule it.

Power and Claims: Daenerys has three young dragons, hatched from eggs given to her on her wedding day. The dragons are her most important symbols of power and rightful rule. Her conquests have provided a great deal of money, which she needs to pay her army. She has some merchant connections who can sell her ships. At her side sits one of the best knights and strategists of Westeros, the former Lord Commander of the Kingsguard, Barristan Selmy. Her army now includes both foot and horse troops.

Goals: Daenerys considers ruling Westeros her birthright. She believes she would be the best ruler, gracing Westeros with her enlightened reign. Patient, she will watch for the best opportunity for invasion. She would also like to find a suitable consort and bear children to continue the Targaryen line.

Targaryen Bannermen

The following individuals and groups are some of the most important followers of Daenerys Targaryen.

Dothraki, the Horsepeople: The Dothraki congregate around strong leaders who win battles. Currently, Daenerys has three especially sworn to guard her. About 80 more stayed on after her husband, a powerful Dothraki clan leader (a khal in their tongue) was killed. The right leader could form a mounted army of a hundred thousand Dothraki. Barbarian PCs originating from the Dothraki could unite the tribes either under their own banner or Daenerys's.

The Unsullied: An elite army of eunuch soldiers, the Unsullied trained from youth to fight with spear, shield, and short sword. They are impervious to pain or pleasure, desiring only to obey Daenerys.

Mercenary Troops: The best mercenaries serve with "The Stormcrows" under Daario Naharis (8th-level Fighter). Sellsword PCs, especially swashbucklers, might come from his troop.

Barristan Selmy (18th-level Fighter): His Dornish connections could move the Tyrells to Daenerys' side. Already he has saved her from assassins, and he often adds his advice to her decisions. Expect him to lead her troops in battle.

Stronghold

Daenerys has not yet returned to Westeros, the land she left as a small child. As she grows in power and gathers more followers, it is likely that she'll return to the land of her birth with an army at her back.

KING OF THE IRON ISLANDS

Reavers of old, the folk of the Iron Islands are hard, cruel, and as dangerous in their own way as any other threat in Westeros. Adventure abounds in the iron islands in the form of skirmishes with mainland forces, raids, and political intrigue. The novella "Arms of the Kraken" presented in *Dragon* #305 shows how varied and dangerous the Iron Islands can be.

History: The Greyjoys of the Iron Islands have always lead a fierce and independent people, and only the might of the Targaryen dragons kept them tied to the rest of Westeros. The history of the islands, and their future if they can choose their own destiny, is one of strife, raids, and unrest. Unlike the lords of the other great houses of Westeros, the Greyjoys gained a sure hold as the predominant family on the Iron Islands as a result of the Targaryen rule. In ancient times, the captains and chieftains of the islands choose their own kings through a rite called the kingsmoot.

Balon Greyjoy, tired of the yoke of the rulers in King's Landing, declared himself King of the Isles, and led his people in open revolt. After a short military campaign, Balon fell from one of the high bridges on Pyke (ancestral stronghold of the Greyjoys), and his chosen successor, daughter Asha Greyjoy, enjoys much support—especially from ship captains. But

while she captured Deepwood Motte on the mainland, Balon's pirate brother Euron Greyjoy (7th-level barbarian/5th-level fighter), took the Iron Island capital, Pyke, proclaiming himself king. Euron bought his followers' loyalty with a large stockpile of loot; rumors say he carries a magical horn of dragon binding, magical weapons and rings, and the knowledge to use them. Balon's brother Victarion (8th-level Fighter), commander of the Iron Fleet, controls the Neck including Moat Cailin, the strategic causeway between north and south along the Kingsroad. Quicksand and bogs defend Moat Cailin better than its three mossy ruins of towers ever could. Only the Crannogmen, bannermen to the Starks, know how to bypass the roadway.

Balon's brother, Aeron Damphair, has called for a "kingsmoot", a gather of all the captains and lords of the Iron Islands. This kingsmoot is to meet on Old Wyck to choose the next king. Contenders come forward bringing gifts as well as their most convincing speech to sway the captains to their side. (The events of the kingsmoot are detailed in *Dragon* #305.)

Power and Claims: The Iron Fleet rivals that of the crown. Beyond their ships, they have little wealth outside of fishing and low-grade mining.

Four captains command wide support. Asha commands the land and about 30 ships scattered between the Neck and Deepwood Motte. A strong leader, Victarion controls the Iron Fleet of over 50 ships centered at the Neck. Euron holds sway over Pyke and the fleet still stationed there, and his gold has bought support from many less scrupulous captains. Individual captains can and do switch allegiance at any time depending on who they like best.

Goals: Euron Greyjoy wants Pyke to become the ultimate pirate base from which to take over all of Westeros. Asha Greyjoy wants to wrest the throne from her uncle Euron and regain command over Pyke and the other three islands. She would like to control the mainland coast north of the Neck to provide rich coastal lands for the ironborn to resettle. Victarion vacillates between the desire to follow the path laid down for a younger brother, staying in command of the Iron Fleet, and the need to keep the throne from a woman (Asha), or the godless kinsman who cuckolded him (Euron). Victarion and Asha both care for each other, each hoping the other will become a supporter instead of a contender.

IRON ISLAND ADVENTURES

The following adventure ideas could be used as part of a campaign set on the Iron Islands or as a short segment of a larger Westeros campaign.

Lord of the Islands: A mini-campaign focused on who wins the Iron Island throne offers many possibilities. Even after the events of the novella from issue #305, the factious leaders of the Iron Islands need strong warriors, able advisors, and clever servants like the player characters.

Defend the Isles: After the Iron Kingdom's successor is chosen, there could be any number of minor skirmishes that the PCs participate in, either on the side of the mainland forces or as sailors on the Iron Fleet.

The Kraken's Horn: Lately, giant krakens have been rumored to be seen around Pyke. Ironborn legend says a

DRAGONS OF WESTEROS

Daenerys went into her husband's funeral pyre with dragon eggs and walked out unscathed cradling three live dragons. The smallest, Rhaegal, has bright green scales tinted with bronze; Viserion has scales of cream with gold highlights; and the largest of the three, Drogon, is black. They shimmer like polished metal. The dragons are her allies and her children. They help her see through illusions and intimidate her enemies.

The dragons have large, translucent wings and an appetite for cooked meat. Their red eyes and black diamond teeth are sharper than human sight and human steel. The dragons breathe fire and are held under control by their bond with Daenerys. The first living dragons seen in over a century, their birth might herald the return of powerful forces, and magic seems to work better now that dragons have returned. Dragon eggs are rare. They look like enameled porcelain but are heavy as stone. Dragons are rumored to originate in the far, far east, beyond even the eastern kingdoms where Daenerys lives.

DAENERYS TARGARYEN

Female human sorcerer 6: CR 6; Size M (5 ft.); HD 6d4+6; hp 21; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flatfooted 10; Attack +3 melee (1d4 dagger/crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d4 dagger/crit 19-20); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +9; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6*, Diplomacy +13, Concentration +10, Knowledge (history) +6*, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +6; Iron Will, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Dodge

*Indicates a cross-class skill in which Daenerys has 4.5 ranks.

Spells (6/7/6/3; base save DC = 12 + spell level): 0th—*daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, mending, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*burning hands, charm person, cause fear, endure elements;* 2nd—*darkvision, hypnotic pattern;* 3rd—*suggestion.*

Possessions: Dagger, gold crown, three dragons, various clothes.

The blood of ancient Valyria runs in Daenerys' veins, giving her violet eyes, silvery-gold hair, and the ability to handle dragons. A stranger to Westeros, she lived most of her life on a continent to the east. Her youth inhibits her from understanding all the consequences of her actions, although she has the best of intentions. But she learns fast, never repeating mistakes.

"Blood and fire," the Targaryen motto, hints at what the future holds in store for Daenerys. She has abilities that border on the magical, and she has used her power to hatch the dragon's eggs and scry visions of the future. She is especially resistant to illusions, having used this ability and dragon fire to defeat a wizard's guild. A party interested in either dragons or magic would do well at her side.

Although young, Daenerys has gathered a substantial army and a large number of civilian followers to her banner, and promises to grow into a wise and capable ruler.

Note: As with all magic and spells presented in this article, these are suggestions, attempting only to convey the spirit of the abilities that some of the characters in Westeros possess. See the Magic in Westeros sidebar for more about spells and spellcasting.

HOW WESTEROS IS DIFFERENT

Westeros is as varied and interesting a world as fantasy literature has seen, and cataloging the setting's rich history, engaging characters, and unique imaginative elements completely is likely beyond the scope of a complete roleplaying game, much less the material presented here. However, players wanting to experience and adventure in the setting can, with a few broad strokes, create at least a feel consistent with the novels. A good place to begin this process is to focus on how the world of Westeros differs from a typical D&D campaign world, and bring those changes into the game.

Seasons: Seasons in Westeros last several years at a time, making winter a dangerous time for all as hunger, dangerous predators, and even supernatural threats from beyond the Wall wear down reserves of food and defenses.

History: With three novels written and more to come, Westeros has a deeper and more detailed history than most D&D campaign worlds. If the players are willing, reading the novels as a group provides a foundation in the setting's history that simply cannot be found elsewhere.

Mass Combat: Warfare is an important and compelling element of the setting, and the consequences of battles and sieges should touch even non-warrior characters. At least some of the campaign's adventures should involve skirting the outriders of a large army, slipping into a besieged castle, or spying out the position of an enemy in service of a liege lord.

Social Class, Followers, and Wealth: Power in Westeros is often synonymous with wealth, and feats like Leadership and the Landlord feat described in the *Stronghold Builder's Guidebook* give characters a means to rise in the world despite the absence of magic in many campaigns (see the Magic in Westeros sidebar for more information on magic and player character wealth levels). In addition, wealth in Westeros is expressed through followers, strongholds, and the ability to recruit mercenary soldiers rather than through personal magic items. Some prices for common assistants and mercenary troops can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but more detailed listings and prices can be found in the *Arms & Equipment Guide*. With these ideas in mind, it is relatively easy to stick to the average wealth by level guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, just grant the players strongholds, titles, and followers rather than typical D&D treasure.

magic horn to summon these sea creatures exists. The PCs have been hired to track down this horn to quell the threat of the krakens.

Greyjoy Bannermen

The following individuals and minor houses are beholden to House Greyjoy or play another prominent role in the Iron Islands.

Aeron Damphair: A priest of the Drowned God, Aeron (9th-level cleric) commands great respect from many inhabitants of the Iron Islands. Aeron follows the old ways, calling upon The Drowned God to show the true king. He cannot tolerate lapses of faith and considers it blasphemy to put a woman, a craven, or a godless pirate on the throne. He will likely back Victarion unless a better choice emerges—such as a devout player character. Personal prejudices aside, he will transfer allegiance to any other ironborn rather than risk defeat by outsiders.

Lord Harlow: Asha's maternal uncle, nicknamed The Reader, uses his book-learning to help her understand how history and legend apply to the present. His library has no equal on the islands. Among the Iron Islands, civilized Harlow has the highest population as well as the highest concentration of riches.

Stronghold: Pyke, Capital of the Iron Islands

Already breached in a previous war, the castle walls won't stop an invading army. Built on three islets and multiple seastacks, the castle includes several large towers all interconnect by narrow wood and rope bridges of slippery purchase. Both the king and the

Seastone Chair reside in the Sea Tower. Sculptors shaped the pure black Seastone Chair into a giant kraken. No one knows if any magical powers can be attributed to the chair. A cliffside path connects Pyke with the harbor at Lordsport, which houses the fleet.

> "Great or small,
> **we must do our duty.**"
> —Stannis Baratheon

THE STARKS, KINGS OF THE NORTH

Lords of the north, the Starks have the blood of the first men flowing in their veins, and the fate of Westeros seems to be inextricably tied to the fate of Eddard Stark's five children.

History: Near the end of the Baratheon rebellion, Catelyn Tully married Eddard Stark, and their union united the North and the riverlands.

Together, Eddard and Catelyn had five children. From oldest to youngest, the Stark children are Robb, 16; Sansa, 13; Arya, 11; Brandon (called Bran), 9; and Rickon, 5. Through Eddard Stark, they have a half-brother, Jon Snow, 16.

Already a recognized beauty, Sansa Stark (1st-level Aristocrat) has auburn hair, high cheekbones, and all the skills a noblewoman needs. She lived in the Red Keep at King's Landing—a hostage forced into marrying Tyrion Lannister. Despite the danger and political power surrounding her, Sansa escaped from her imprisonment, hiding at the Eyrie in the Vale of Arryn. There she learns the arts of spying and deceit from master intriguer Lord Petyr Baelish. The Lannisters believe she murdered King Joffrey and have a bounty on her head.

Two of the Stark children, Sansa and Rickon, are important pawns in the current political struggles. Sansa Stark remains south of the wall at the Eyrie. While Rickon likely has an important and event-filled future, he is as yet too young to influence events much on his own. He can be found with the wild woman Osha, a Free Folk captive of Winterfell who helped Bran and Rickon escape the sack of Winterfell.

Through swordplay, stealth, and luck, Arya Stark, 11, (Fighter 1) managed to escape the Lannisters both in King's Landing and in the battle-scarred riverlands. Her personal motto, "Stick them with the pointy end," reflects her love of swordplay. Lately she sees the advantages of bows, and would like to learn how to use them. Traveling by herself on a ship to the North, she seeks her half-brother, Jon Snow a member of the Night's Watch. (See

THE BROTHERHOOD WITHOUT BANNERS

The Brotherhood, an outlaw fellowship that ranges throughout the area south of the trident and north of the Blackwater rush is a growing force in the region. Ser Beric Dondarrion (paladin 4) and Thoros of Myr (5th- level cleric) lead the band of outlaws who, at their heart, seek to protect the commoners who have no way to protect themselves. To keep his men alive, Sir Beric has ordered the outlaws travel in small bands with individual leaders, striking fast and slinking back to safety. This type of organization makes fascinating material for a short campaign or as a small section of a larger campaign arc; the players can easily play members or allies of the outlaws sent out as a small group, ambushing small parties of travelers, a few of the hated Lannister troops, or even segments of the Tully bannermen.

Although he is not one of Robb Stark's bannermen, Ser Beric arguably has more ties to the Starks than to the other factions. The brotherhood has many secret hideouts including Acorn Hall, a small holding most notable for remaining intact in the war-ravaged riverlands.

· Illustrated by Emily Fiegenschuh

> **"Why do the gods make kings and queens** if not to protect the ones who can't protect themselves?"
>
> — Daenerys Targaryen

the article on the Ice Wall campaign for more about Jon Snow and the Stark children still in the north.)

Arya, Brandon, and their bastard brother Jon Snow fight in the "Ice Wall Campaign". Although too young to rule himself, Rickon Stark, 5, could become King of the North with Catelyn Stark as regent. Rickon currently travels with his direwolf and a wildling woman.

Players attracted to the older, wilder ways of independent lords and spirit magics might adventure in the lands of the north and encounter the Starks. For DMs, integrating the Ice Wall and the Clash of Kings campaigns would be easy using Stark loyalists. The PCs could move between both campaigns while attempting to reunite the scattered Stark children.

Power and Claims: The Starks hold title to Winterfell and its lands. All honorable Northmen follow their leadership. The magic and gods of the woods side with the Starks.

Stark Bannermen

If the north rises for the Starks again, they could raise an army of Northmen including thousands of horsemen.

The Tullys. The Stark's strongest allies in the south are the Tullys, who bring a large number of men to the cause as well as strategic forts along the Trident.

Lady Brienne of Tarth (Fighter 16): An extremely large knight, Brienne carries a *+1 Valyrian steel longsword* named Oathkeeper. Brienne befriended Catelyn Stark and has pledged to rescue Arya and Sansa.

The Manderlys of White Harbor: Strong in chivalric tradition, White Harbor alone can outfit an army of 1,500 including 200 riders. A fleet could be built here to take on the ironborn longships, but such large-scale efforts would take a lot of time.

The Reeds: Howland Reed, the Lord of Greywater Watch, leads the crannogmen who live in the marsh just north of the Neck. As their bannermen, all crannogmen will help the Starks, but Lord Reed and his children will go further risking lives and land for them.

Crannogmen often know wilderness magic, like breathing mud, running on leaves, changing earth to water and back, talking to trees, and having prophetic dreams. They wear shirts of bronze scales, and hunt with three prong spears and nets. Sometimes, they use poison brewed from marsh plants to make silent kills. They know secret ways to bypass or attack anyone who holds the Neck.

Stronghold: Winterfell

The Stark's castle, Winterfell, lies in the central forests between the Wall and the Neck. By the standards of Lannisport or King's Landing, Winterfell is a rustic backwater, but it is still one of the few large rallying points for the north.

The castle is built on top of hot springs that provide thermal heat all winter. At one time, the castle included such civilized trappings as hunting kennels, a great house, first keep, gatehouse, maester's tower, crypts, godswood, bell tower, guards hall, kennels, and stables. But the castle burned down during the recent fighting with the Greyjoys, and most of its inhabitants have been killed or scattered. The stone towers and granite walls remain, though ruined. No matter what its condition, the Starks will seek to return to their source of strength, Winterfell. And Catelyn Stark neé Tully will seek to capture Riverrun, her ancestral hall.

MAGIC IN WESTEROS

One of the most noticeable things about the Westeros setting is its relative lack of magic. The gradual crescendo of magical effects, abilities, and creatures revealed as the series progresses makes for wonderful reading, giving the setting a sense of wonder and mystery. These strengths aside, it is difficult to translate some aspects of the D&D rules into the setting. The guidelines below should give you some ideas of how you can use magic in a Westeros Game while maintaining the feel of the novels.

No Magic At All: In this option, magic is solely the province of NPCs and the few historied items revealed in the books. Player characters are restricted to either three character classes from the *Player's Handbook*: barbarian, fighter, rogue. As an interesting variant, this setting could be played using only four of the NPC classes from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*: the aristocrat, commoner, expert, and warrior, and the three classes listed above could fill much the same roll that prestige classes fill in a regular campaign and become available only after players reach 5th level in one of the NPC classes. Because this option is the option that remains truest to the setting as presented in the books, the NPCs in these articles are presented with the relatively low levels of personal equipment that typifies this setting. Characters and NPCs should have no more than one quarter of the average wealth available to characters of their level as listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Restricted Magic: In this option, all of the classes in the *Player's Handbook* are open to players and NPCs, but no spells above a certain level (4th-level in most cases) are available, and characters and NPCs should have no more than one quarter of the average wealth available to characters of their level as listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Just Play D&D: To fans of the Westeros novels, this option might seem heavy handed, but it is in many ways the easiest to implement with inexperienced players. In this option, the novels provide names, geography, and an interesting basis for political structure, but all of the normal D&D options are available to the players. Spellcasters hail from distant cities, but their spells function, and the warriors that accompany them wield the magic swords and items that typify D&D parties. DMs running this campaign should feel free to include monsters and equip foes with magic that challenges the characters and make an interesting play experience.

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___ Entdecker ..... Mayfair Games, Inc.
___ Kingdoms ..... Fantasy Flight Games
___ Squint ..... Out of the Box Publishing
___ Sucking Vacuum ..... Alien Menace Games

Best Board Game Expansion or Supplement

___ Caracassone The Expansion ..... Rio Grande Games
___ Great White Fleet ..... Avalanche Press
___ Marvel HeroClix Clobberin' Time ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Playing with Pyraminds- 12 Games for Icehouse Pieces ..... Looney Labs
___ Zombies!!! 2: Zombie Corps(e) ..... Twilight Creations

Best Card Game Expansion or Supplement

___ Battle of the Bands : Backstage Pass ..... Third World Games, Inc
___ Game of Thrones : A Sea of Storms ..... Fantasy Flight Games
___ Munchkin 2: Unnatural Axe ..... Steve Jackson Games
___ The Lord of the Rings TCG - The Two Towers ..... Decipher, Inc.
___ Shadowfist : Boom-Chaka-Laka ..... Z-Man Games

Best Game Aid or Accessory

___ Bag O' Zombies ..... Twilight Creations
___ Gamemastering Secrets ..... Grey Ghost Press, Inc.
___ Mage Knight Dungeons Artifacts Set 1 & 2 ..... Mike Mulvihil
___ The Pocket Grimoires ..... Green Ronin
___ Robin's Laws of Good Gamemastering ..... Steve Jackson Games

Best Game Periodical

___ Dork Tower ..... Dork Storm Press
___ Dungeon / Polyhedron Magazine ..... Paizo Publishing
___ Games Unplugged ..... Fast Forward Entertainment
___ Knights of the Dinner Table Magazine ..... Kenzer & Company
___ Pyramid Online ..... Steve Jackson Games

Best Game-Related Fiction Long Form

___ A Morbid Initiation (Victorian Vampire) ..... White Wolf
___ Book of More Flesh (All Flesh Must Be Eaten) ..... Eden Studios
___ Dragon Isles (Dragonlance) ..... Wizards of the Coast
___ Dragons of the Vanished Moon (Dragonlance) ..... Wizards of the Coast
___ Ghost War (MechWarrior Dark Ages) ..... ROC
___ Wind of War (Legend of the Five Rings) ..... Wizards of the Coast

Best Graphic Fiction

___ Once Upon A Time (in Nodwick # 18) ..... Dork Storm Press
___ Understanding Gamers (in Dork Tower # 18) ..... Dork Storm Press
___ Squire Lee (from Knights of the Dinner Table 68 and 69) ..... Kenzer & Company
___ Bolt & Quiver: Back to Basics (from Polyhedron #154/ Dungeon #95) ..... Paizo Publishing
___ Mage Knight Stolen Destiny #1 ..... WizKids, LLC

Best Game-Related Fiction Short Form

___ Day on the Job (Silver Age Sentinels core rules) .... Guardians Of Order
___ Enemy Healer (from The Official Collector's Guide to Mage Knight, Mage Knight) ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Enemy of My Enemy, The (from The Awakening, When Darkness Comes) ..... Full Moon Enterprises, Twilight Creations
___ Ethical Treatment of Meat (from The Book of More Flesh, AFMBE) ..... Eden Studios
___ Head Games (from The Horror Within, When Darkness Comes) ..... Twilight Creations
___ Insurrection That Never Was (from Bertrem's Guide to the War of Souls, Vol. II, Dragonlance) ..... Wizards of the Coast
___ It Must be Thursday - Capes and Capers (from Games Unplugged 19) ..... Fast Forward Entertainment

Best Historical Board Game

___ Afrika Korps: The Desert War ..... Avalanche Press
___ Gettysburg 1863 ..... Avalanche Press
___ Hammer of the Scots ..... Columbia Games
___ Sid Meier's Civilization : The Boardgame ..... Eagle Games
___ Soldier Kings ..... Avalanche Press
___ WWII : Barbarossa to Berlin ..... GMT Games

Best Historical Figure Miniature Series

___ Celtos ..... I-Kore
___ Crusader range ..... Griffin Miniatures
___ em4 miniatures Oriental Blades I ..... Crystal Caste
___ Figurehead 1 : 6000 WWII Range ..... Noble Miniatures
___ Minifigs N Scale WWII ..... GFI/Minifigs
___ Xyston Ancients 15mm & 1/600 ..... I-kore

Best Historical Miniature

___ 28mm WWII Range: British Stretcher Team ..... Black Tree Design
___ Boeing B-52 Stratofortress 1 : 1250 Scale ..... Noble Miniatures
___ em4 Miniatures Oriental Blades I Ninja ..... Crystal Caste
___ Minifigs N Scale M4A3E2 "Jumbo" Sherman ..... GFI/Minifigs
___ Modern US Infantry (Advancing Figure) 1:285 Scale ..... GHQ

Best Historical Miniature Rules

___ Face of Battle: VC Commonwealth Expansion , Meramic Enterprises, Inc.
___ Kampfgruppe Commander ..... Sovereign Press
___ Sea Wars Fleet Actions ..... A & A Game Engineering
___ South Atlantic War II ..... Clash of Arms Games

Best Play-by-Mail Game

___ Button Men Web Game ..... Cheapass Games
___ Dark Realm ..... Midnight Games
___ Middle-Earth Play-By-Mail Third Age, circa 1650 ..... Game Systems, Inc.
___ Middle-Earth Play-by-mail, 4th Age, circa 1000 ..... Game Systems, Inc.
___ North Island Campaign - A Legends II Module ..... Midnight Games
___ Starweb ..... Flying Buffalo Inc

Best Roleplaying Adventure

___ Barsalve in Chaos ..... Living Room Games
___ City of the Spider Queen ..... Wizards of the Coast
___ Doom of Odin ..... Avalanche Press
___ Little Keep on the Boarderlands ..... Kenzer & Company
___ Sheep on the Borderlands (from Dork Tower 17) ..... Dork Storm Press
___ Son of the Dragon appearing in Vlad, the Impaler: Blood Prince of Wallachia ..... Avalanche Press
___ Transhuman Space Orbital Decay ..... Steve Jackson Games

Best Roleplaying Game

___ Buffy the Vampire Slayer RPG ..... Eden Studios
___ d20 Call of Cthulhu ..... Wizards of the Coast
___ Mutants and Masterminds RPG ..... Green Ronin
___ Silver Age Sentinels ..... Guardians Of Order, Inc.
___ The Lord of the Rings RPG ..... Decipher, Inc.

Best Roleplaying Supplement

___ Celtic Age ..... Avalanche Press
___ Freeport: The City of Adventure ..... Green Ronin
___ Kingdom of Kalamar Player's Guide ..... Kenzer & Company
___ Nyambe : African Adventures ..... Atlas Games
___ Vlad, the Impaler: Blood Prince of Wallachia ..... Avalanche Press

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Board Game

___ Lord of the Rings : The Confrontation ..... Fantasy Flight Games
___ Mage Knight Dungeons ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Marvel HeroClix : Infinity Challenge ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Puerto Rico ..... Rio Grande Games
___ When Darkness Comes...The Awakening ..... Twilight Creations

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Figure Miniature

___ Chaos War Mammoth ..... Forge World
___ Death Sleet ..... Reaper Miniatures
___ Dwarven Battlemage ..... Kenzer & Company
___ Marvel Hero Clix Sentinel ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Sauron ..... Citadel Miniatures

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Figure Miniature Series

___ Dark Heaven Legends ..... Reaper Miniatures
___ HackMaster Tactical Combat Miniatures ..... Kenzer & Company
___ Lord of the Rings : The Two Towers ..... Citadel Miniatures
___ Mage Knight Sinister ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Mechwarrior: Dark Age ..... Wizkids, LLC

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Miniatures Rules

___ Gummi Wars ..... Inner City Games Designs
___ Lord of the Rings : The Two Towers ..... Games Workshop
___ MechWarrior : Dark Age ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Monster Island : The Game of Giant Monster Combat ..... Firefly Games
___ Wicked Things ..... Kenzer & Company

Best Trading Card Game

___ A Game of Thrones: Westros Edition ..... Fantasy Flight Games
___ Star Trek CCG 2nd Ed. ..... Decipher, Inc.
___ Star Wars: TCG ..... Wizards of the Coast
___ Tom : The Origins Metagame ..... Flying Buffalo Inc
___ Yu-Gi-OH! ..... Upper Deck

Best Traditional Card Game

___ Battle of the Bands ..... Third World Games, Inc
___ Citadels ..... Fantasy Flight Games
___ Management Material - General Office Ed. ..... Zipwhaa, Inc.
___ Nanofictionary (the card game of telling tiny stories) ..... Looney Labs
___ Star Munchkin ..... Steve Jackson Games

Game of the Year

___ Buffy the Vampire Slayer RPG ..... Eden Studios
___ Mage Knight Dungeons ..... WizKids, LLC
___ Marvel HeroClix : Infinity Challenge ..... WizKids, LLC
___ MechWarrior : Dark Age ..... WizKids, LLC
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MINIATURES GAMES ~ GAME MAGAZINES ~ GAME ACCESSORIES ~ MINIATURES ~ ROLEPLAYING GAMES

A Song of Dice & Fire

by Dave Gross

PHOTO BY PARRIS

UNDER M FOR MARTIN

Long before A Song of Ice and Fire, Martin won fans and praise for such works as *Dying of the Light* (1977), *Windhaven* (with Lisa Tuttle, 1981), *Fevre Dream* (1982), and *The Armageddon Rag* (1983). His love of comics (not to mention gaming) paid off when he edited the popular Wild Cards series, and he has won four Hugo, two Nebula, one Bram Stoker award, and one World Fantasy Award for stories ranging from science fiction to horror to fantasy, a collective genre he likes to call "weird stuff." For Martin's complete bibliography and much more, check out his home page at www.georgerrmartin.com.

George Richard Raymond Martin is not so different from other gamers . . . except for the award-winning author part.

Born in 1948 in New Jersey, Martin demonstrated an early talent for writing by selling his monster stories to other children for a nickel, which no doubt helped finance his burgeoning comic book habit. He upped his rates by making his first professional sale to *Galaxy* magazine at age 21. After completing a Master's degree at Northwestern University, Martin continued to write on the side while he taught journalism until 1979, when he turned to writing full-time and relocated to Santa Fe. Seven years later, he joined CBS to work first on the *Twilight Zone* and then the fan-beloved *Beauty and the Beast.* After ten years in Hollywood, he turned once more to writing novels.

There he began to work in earnest on a project he had begun years earlier, a series of novels known collectively as A Song of Ice and Fire. The saga blends political intrigue, revenge drama, and martial action with a deft treatment of magic worthy of that other fantasy author with a double-R in his name. Its first volume, *A Game of Thrones,* proved that the epic fantasy was still vital and prompted Anne McCaffrey to term the series a "fantistorical" for its authentic characters and setting. With *A Clash of Kings,* both the audience and the page count grew to colossal proportions, and the trend continued with *A Storm of Swords.* Now a legion of impatient fans are anxious for the next volume, *A Feast for Crows.*

They'll have to wait a little longer, admits Martin. While the book is not yet finished, you can help ease the pain of waiting by sampling some of his prologue chapters in *Dragon* #305 (or catch up on his previous work—see the Under M for Martin sidebar). Better yet, read on to discover Martin's thoughts on writing, history, and roleplaying games.

THE BIG STORY

With a series that already spans three books, each big enough to stun a dire wolf, it's hard to imagine how George R.R. Martin keeps all the families, alliances, historical events, locations, and even sword names straight. Fans might expect that he has a vast library of maps and references, but he says it isn't so. "I have a few notes. I have a few outlines and timelines. Most of it is still between my ears, God help us."

Such admissions explain why one fan demanded to know what plans Martin had made for another author to finish the series in the event of his untimely demise. While Martin refuses to tempt fate by preparing for such a dreadful contingency, he promises that his design for the rest of the story is alive and well in his own imagination. "In some ways I remember Westeros and the Seven Kingdoms better than I remember my real life," he says. "I'll remember details about some minor character, but not necessarily someone I met at the last convention."

Writing a story as big as A Song of Ice and Fire is challenging not only because of its length but also because of its complexity. Each previous volume includes at least eight point-of-view characters, and the next one promises even more, including the characters in the extended prologue. Having so many focal characters lets Martin show events from all over a big world, but it can be tricky. "What one

GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

on Writing, History, and Gaming

character does obviously affects what happens to the other characters, and they have to react to it," he says. "So it is a juggling act. Sometimes I feel like I'm riding in a chariot. I started out with two horses, and then I had four, and now I've got like sixteen horses; they all want to go in different directions, and I'm holding onto the reins for dear life. But in the immortal words of Super Chicken, 'You knew the job was dangerous when you took it.' So, there I am."

While Martin is familiar with outlining because of his years in Hollywood, where it's required, he doesn't do it for his novels. "I have my destination in mind," he says, "but I don't necessarily know every twist and turn of the route that's going to get me there. And sometimes the characters surprise you. They take you off in different directions that are richer and more rewarding than what you had intended."

"Unfortunately," he adds, "sometimes they also take you off into dead ends. That's a drawback of the way I work." That means sometimes Martin writes long passages before deciding to go back and rework the events instigated by an upstart character, leaving whole chapters of unrealized stories on his hard drive. Before you get your hopes up for a "director's cut" edition of A Song of Ice and Fire, Martin explains that it might work that way for movies, but not for books. "These things are not excised scenes so much as they're things that never happened, or alternate things," he explains. "Sometimes the story comes around, and you use the chapter later in the book, or you use pieces of it, but there's a certain amount of waste."

Notwithstanding the whims of his bossy characters, Martin has a specific conclusion in mind for the story—including the fates of each of the main characters. He admits it's possible he could change his mind about a character's destiny before the end, but he insists, "It's not possible to change my mind by fan mail, so the people who are writing me and trying to vote for one character or another—I'm always glad to hear what they have to say, but I don't know that it's really going to impact much on the story. This is not Survivor. You don't get to vote anyone off the island."

As a lover of conventions and an author who appreciates his fans, Martin knows he can't completely escape outside influence. Still, he enjoys the solitude of sitting alone in front of the computer as he writes the story. At that point, he says, "You have to kind of forget about [the fans] and forget about your editors and your publishers and your agents. Forget about all of these things and just go with the characters, go with the story, and what they're telling you to do. That's the true voice."

That true voice can take some time to achieve when each volume grows larger than the previous. "Yeah, that's a problem," he laughs. "*A Storm of Swords* was just at the borderline of how big a book can be. It's been split into two in paperback in England. Bantam's going to try to get out the mass-market paperback in one volume, but God, it's going to be a big book. You're going to get carpal tunnel syndrome trying to hold it up in the bathtub."

> **I think magic should be magical.** It should be mysterious and wondrous.
> —George R. R. Martin

THOSE WHO REMEMBER THE PAST

Martin is as voracious a reader as he is prolific an author. Among his favorite subjects is history, which had a great influence on A Song of Ice and Fire. "I wanted to do one that was closer to historical fiction," he says. "I even played briefly with the idea of not including any overt fantasy elements at all. Finally I decided against that, and I did put in the dragons and some magic, some things that partake of traditional fantasy elements—but a relatively small number of them compared to some fantasies."

While fans have noticed echoes of the War of the Roses and the Hundred Years War in the conflicts in Westeros, Martin is interested in many historical periods. "Most of my interest is in pre-gunpowder [eras]. I think once the guns and cannons and such come in, somehow I seem to lose a little interest. So it's the sword eras and before that that are my favorite periods."

Despite its grounding in historical authenticity, the Westeros saga is undeniably a fantasy, with such magical elements as dragons, the terrifying Others, and the dreadful magic of the red god R'hllor. At first the magic was so subtle as to seem practically nonexistent, but that is changing. "In each book, the level of magic is rising slightly, so at the end it will be larger. Some of the really hard-core fantasy readers who are reading books in which there are wizards throwing fireballs on every page aren't going to find it 'spectacular' even at its highest level."

Martin finds the magical elements some of the hardest to write. "It's very difficult to do well. I have strong feelings about magic; I feel it's misused in most fantasy. To a certain extent I went back to Tolkien and looked at what he did, because I still think he's done it better than anyone. He has dragons, of course, and he has various mythic creatures, like the Balrog. The bad fantasy treats wizards and other supernatural creatures almost like super heroes. They're flying around, they have powers, they have magic this and magic that. Gandalf and Saruman, their power is knowledge. They know things. They know history. They know lore. They know ancient truth that other people have forgotten, but you don't see them doing a lot of on-stage magic. By keeping magic subtle, by keeping it off-stage, by not telling you a lot about it, I think it becomes more powerful. I think magic should be magical. It should be mysterious and wondrous. You see it and your eyes . . . glow."

The level of magic is one of the great distinctions between fantasy fiction and fantasy game worlds. Sometimes, Martin thinks authors make the mistake of placing game conventions on their worlds. "There's a lot of fantasy now where they develop magical systems," he says. "I even get that question sometimes at conventions: 'Can you tell us a little about your magical system?' I think that's a mistake. That just makes magic an alternate kind of science. You can have magical wiring diagrams there, and magical recipes where you mix so much toad's eye and so much powdered virgin's milk, and you get this effect. That's not really magic, is it? That's just science that doesn't work."

GAME DAYS

Martin has been a roleplaying gamer for about twenty years, lately with a group including fellow authors Walter Jon Williams, Melinda Snodgrass, Vic Milan, and Jane Lindskold. Like many other game groups, they meet once a week, with occasional interruptions for trips or book deadlines. Perhaps shocking to D&D players, the group's system of choice is not the d20 system. Martin defends their heresy:

"When I first started gaming back in the 80s, we played different games. We played *Morrow Project.* Then we played a lot of *Call of Cthulhu*—that was one of our favorites for years—then *Superworld,* which was a superhero game. That ultimately gave birth to the Wild Cards series. Those were all fun, and we had a lot of good times with those games, but each game had its own set of rules. What was annoying about that was that every time you picked up a game, you had to learn a different set of rules. Then *GURPS* came along. It appealed to us greatly, because it was one system that was good for any game."

Martin's gamemaster is fellow scribe Walter Jon Williams, who runs a historical campaign set in the late Roman Republic. "It's a very realistic game. There are no fantasy elements. It's almost similar to the books by John Maddox Roberts or Steven Saylor. A lot of times, we're solving murder mysteries. Or, failing that, we're leading armies in the field or dealing with political problems, trying to preserve the Republic—and at the same time advance our own personal careers."

It should come as little surprise that a game group consisting principally of authors tends to emphasize their characters over combat. "We go entire nights without rolling dice. Our games are very heavy on the roleplaying part of the game, with Walter acting out characters and us acting our characters, and that's the joy of it—the character interaction."

Like all gamers, Martin jumps at the chance to talk about his character—or rather, his late character. "My first character was called Septimus Sempronius Gracchus," he says, thus ensuring that we'll have to spend an hour on Google checking the spelling. "There were two very important Roman politicians, the brothers Gracchus. They were radicals who wanted land reform and ran for Tribune; they were both murdered. They were sort of the Kennedy brothers of ancient Rome. Septimus was a descendent of theirs, so he was very much in favor of land reform also. He was extremely intelligent, but he was extremely vocal, as all my characters tend to be, because I have a big mouth and like to talk. Rome had this whole system of duty to your patron, and he had that in spades. Unfortunately, events led poor Septimus to a situation where he had to betray his patron or he had to betray Rome. And there was no answer with his ethical system, so as Romans were wont to do, having no way out, he fell upon his sword."

Like all good gamers, Martin doesn't blame the GM for putting him in such a tough spot. "It was an untenable situation, but it was in some ways fair given the politics of the time and the way I'd set my character up. But it was traumatic, since I loved that character, and I'd played him for like a year and a half. He was a great character, and I was really into him, but to be true to the character, I felt I really had to do that."

And, like all good gamers, Martin blames his cohorts for not saving him from his untimely demise. "The other players could have been a little brighter about it. I tried to give them hints, you know. Septimus was going around saying, 'Where's the best place to stab a man so it won't hurt?' He wrote his will, and he adopted his sister's son as his own heir, and all these other things in preparation for death, but none of the other characters twigged remotely, so they were all very shocked."

Just as when writing a character's demise in A Song of Ice and Fire, Martin knew it was right for the story, but that didn't make it any easier. "It was hard to kill Septimus in the game, and it's hard to kill characters in fiction when you've got a lot invested in them and they're something you've worked on for a long time."

> Perhaps shocking to D&D players, **Martin's group's system is not the d20 system.**

WRITING AND ROLEPLAYING

Even worse than the death of a game character was writing a bloody event in *A Storm of Swords.* Martin recounts it with wistful sadness: "Certainly the Red Wedding in the third book was the hardest thing I had to do. That chapter occurs kind of in the middle of the book, a little after the middle—but by no means at the end. There are hundreds of pages that follow it. Yet it was the last chapter that I wrote. I finished all the stuff afterward. That was a very difficult chapter to write."

Seeing his fictional creations quantified for a game doesn't worry Martin, even though he knows the designers must often guess at things that have not yet been revealed. "[The mysteries] are going to come out for the first time in the books," he says. "So the game designers are going to have to dance around that." Martin has already seen his fiction translated into game terms with the *GURPS Wild Cards* game published by Steve Jackson Games. Ironic, since the Wild Cards stories were inspired by his own experiences playing *Superworld.*

While he enjoys both games and fiction, Martin makes sure not to cross the streams. "You have to keep in mind that the game is a game and the book is a book, and they're not really the same thing. Otherwise, you can get too upset. Roger Zelazny would always quote James M. Cain on this. Cain had a lot of books made by Hollywood, and they were fairly liberal with the changes made to them. An interviewer asked him, 'What do you think of what Hollywood has done to your books?' And Cain responded, 'Hollywood hasn't done anything to my books. See? They're right over there on the shelf. They're just the way I wrote them.' The movies are a separate thing. Roger would always quote that, too, when they asked him things like, 'What do you think of *Damnation Alley?*' I think that's sane. My books are my books, and it'll be interesting to see what comes out of them in the games, but you shouldn't confuse the two."

The real danger in mixing gaming and writing is that one can steal time away from another. "When I'm heavily involved in a book I can play in a game, but I wouldn't want to run a game. I think being gamemaster is much more demanding. When I initially ran the *Superworld* cam-

paign back in the 80s that eventually gave birth to Wild Cards, I lost like a year there. I got into that game so heavily that I think Parris, my girlfriend, was about to call an intervention for me. I'd spend the whole day in my office inventing super villains and rolling dice. Ultimately, we figured out a way to get some good books out of those and incidentally make some money, but we were just gaming almost obsessively for a long period of time."

If that confession isn't enough to prove Martin's gamer street cred, he has an even more revealing confession to make. The man is a min-maxer! To create the game version of the Turtle, who became his signature character in the Wild Cards series, Martin pushed the *GURPS Superworld* rules to the limit. "In order to get the Turtle's armor to the thickness that I wanted on that shell so the villains couldn't harm him, and to get his telekinesis up to the power where he could do some serious damage with it, I accepted some pretty major disadvantages, so the Turtle in the game was basically a deformed thalidomide baby inside that shell. He had no arms and legs—he just had flippers. And he was a dwarf, he was half-blind . . . he had points out the whazoo! And that produced a very powerful character for the *Superworld* campaign."

All well and good for a supers campaign, but such a freakish character presents an author with some problems. "I wanted to write a much more realistic character, so I created Tom Tudbury, who in some ways is a very autobiographical character, probably more so than any other I've ever done, because where he grew up in New Jersey—his background in the project—all that is my own life. So you get a character who's much more subtle, much more balanced, much more realistic than the very extreme character who was created for the game."

GAMING IN THE SEVEN KINGDOMS

Unsurprisingly, Martin suspects a good Westeros campaign would be much like his own gaming experiences. "I think a good Seven Kingdoms game would have a lot of the flavor of a good, realistic medieval game with the added benefit that you're free to create history. The problem with historical fiction is that if you've read a lot of history, you know how it comes out. So you read about the actual War of the Roses, and you know what's going to happen to those two princes in the tower, and you know who's going to win the battle of Bosworth Field. There's not a whole lot of suspense there."

> **To have a great gaming experience, you need great gamers,** a good gamemaster, and a good system.

Martin's own GM faces these questions every session. "When Walter is running his Rome game, he has to walk a tightrope, because none of our characters actually existed in ancient Rome, but we're interacting with people who did exist, like Pompey Magnus and Julius Caesar and Claudius and Cataline and Cicero, and some of the other great heavyweights of the late Republic whose historical actions and failures and triumphs are part of the historical record. So Walter is building a game around these real historical events. To what extent are we free to change these? What happens if we kill Julius Caesar? What happens if we win a battle that was supposed to be lost, or lose a battle that was supposed to be won? It is a tightrope act.

"An Ice and Fire game would have some the same aesthetics as that, but a few other interesting things that you don't have, like dragons and the Wall and the Others, and the seasons. But it wouldn't have those boundaries. You could change history, because you're essentially making up the history as you go along."

For groups who favor combat, Martin suggests the Wall as an excellent location for adventure. For players who prefer intrigue, what would be a better site than King's Landing? With the game material in this issue, readers who've craved a role in the Seven Kingdoms can finally play a part in the saga, which lends itself so well to adventure games that games for A Song of Ice and Fire have already begun to appear. A card game and its first expansion have already been published and are doing well. Martin has also signed a deal for a roleplaying game that should hit game store shelves by the end of the year. A few companies have proposed making computer games, but no deal has been struck. If and when it happens, Martin has specific hopes for the type of game it will be. "I wouldn't want to see it done as a kind of hack-and-slash kind of game, where monsters are jumping out and you're hitting them with your sword and their heads are flying out with big gouts of blood. That's not at all what I would like."

Rather than a mindless action experience, Martin thinks roleplaying requires a more sophisticated approach, one not unlike the one he takes in his game group. When asked what it takes to be a great gamer, he says, "I think wit, imagination, and ability to roleplay your character."

How is that different from the qualities needed to be a great writer?

He replies, "Maybe it isn't."

GEORGE R.R. MARTIN ON GAMING VS. READING

"To have a great gaming experience, you need a group of great gamers and a good gamemaster and a good system, just like for a movie you need a good screenplay and a good director and some good actors. All the elements have to come together. Even one or two bad elements, and it doesn't get properly, and you don't get that great experience. Reading is a much more solitary act: It's the author interacting with the reader. I think it probably yields a deeper experience, because based on my experience in Hollywood, collaboration can be fun, and you can get some good things out of that, you can get some ideas back and forth, but ultimately in any collaborative art form there's a process of compromising that takes place. You want X; he wants Y; you settle for something in the middle. Either that or you have a power struggle, which is always ugly. You can't get that kind of purity of vision you get when one author is in charge of the whole thing. So I like to say of my books, I'm the screenwriter, but I'm also the director, I'm all of the actors, I'm the special effects guy, I'm the set designer, I'm everything. I'm giving you the total experience. I'm not just writing a diagram like a screenplay and depending on other people to fill in these blanks."

DM's Toolbox

MONSTER PCS
CAN I PLAY A TROLL?

by Johnn Four

"Can I play a phase spider rogue or a hellhound fighter in your campaign?"

If your first reaction to a request like this is to cringe, scowl, or take a match to your campaign notes, then cheer up—all is not lost. Fantasy roleplaying and the flexible D&D 3rd Edition rules are all about exploring new ideas. Monster characters allow players who are in a rut to stimulate their imaginations by experimenting with out-of-the-ordinary characters. If nothing else, a monster PC makes a player think about what it means to be a member of a fantasy race while developing the character. Furthermore, monster PCs present an unlimited array of exciting new options for you as a DM. Just consider for a moment the range of options that monster PCs could provide for stories, adventures, and encounters. Allowing such characters in your world can really enhance the sense of wonder that your players feel when they adventure there.

Of course, monster PCs present a number of campaign challenges. Most players would like to avoid continually dealing with issues of racism, misunderstanding, and prejudice toward their PCs. Communication can be another problem, and finding appropriate equipment for a creature with an unusual body type can be difficult in the extreme. All these issues can result in resentment from players who don't have monster PCs but must share in the complications brought about by those who do.

Despite the obvious challenges, the addition of a monster character need not derail your campaign. With a little planning and forethought, you can include such a creature in the party's ranks without disruption. In fact, you can reap significant benefits from a monster PC if you're crafty about it. After all, the player who runs such a character must put a lot of work into creating it and using its abilities to best advantage. Just by paying careful attention to the player's tactics, you can pick up techniques and strategies that might come in handy later, when you run similar creatures as NPCs and opponents. Likewise, you can benefit from any development the player does on that monster's background and society, incorporating the best ideas into your campaign world.

CHALLENGE ONE: Power Gaming

Monster PCs are a power gamer's dream come true. A particular monster might possess a special ability that the player believes will tip the balance in her favor. Alternatively, a player given to min-maxing might have figured out the best combination of class and equipment to support the creature's primary attack form or special ability. This style of gaming can be a lot of fun, and it isn't really a problem if it suits your group, but if this sort of behavior clashes with your group's overall play style, or if you're worried that you haven't yet spotted the advantage the power gamer has seen, you should deal with the situation before it gets out of hand.

Collect Information

On a sheet of paper, make a chart of the monster character's strengths and weaknesses based on its creature type, class, skills, feats, and equipment. Read the creature's entire description in the *Monster Manual* (or other sourcebook), including the descriptive text. Note the creature's ability scores and modifiers, special abilities, climate/terrain specifications, and so on.

This chart can come in handy in a variety of ways. First and foremost, you can use it to perform a thorough analysis of the creature, weighing its potential effect on your overall campaign plans as well as on the kind of encounters you most often use. It can also be a useful tool for creating NPCs of the same monster kind, which you can later use as either enemies or kinfolk of the monster character. The chart can also provide invaluable assistance in customizing encounters that either negate or highlight the creature's particular abilities. Finally, the chart is a great tool for inspiring side-plots—many of which can be built directly from the creature's descriptive text.

Balance the Character for the Campaign

The monster's Effective Character Level (see *Dragon* #293 or *Savage Species* for a list of ECLs) is a good balancing tool that can help you determine whether it can comfortably fit in with the other characters, and if so, how many class levels it should have. If you want to introduce a monster character with an ECL too high for the party's current level, you can use the monster class system presented in *Savage Species*. Almost any monster can be deconstructed into a class-like progression of levels, Hit Dice, and special abilities, and you can use this technique to tailor the monster's ability scores and powers to your campaign. A monster class is often the best compromise because its potential to grow into its full powers allows players to begin play as the monster of their choice, yet you can maintain campaign balance for the present.

You can also go a long way toward lessening the impact of even an obviously min-maxed character by asking the player to flesh it out completely. Request detailed information about the PC's appearance, equipment, personality, goals, and background. This tactic helps to ensure that the character isn't just a bunch of statistics, and it can spawn some excellent roleplaying as well, even from a diehard power gamer. As an added bonus, such information might inspire you to create plot hooks with which you can gently steer that PC and the others toward adventures that are balanced for all. If the player balks at providing all this detail, spread your requests out over time. Consider having a brief one-on-one chat before each game, or posing a question to the player after each session.

Establish Checks and Balances

One way to maintain balance is to bring the monster PC's weaknesses into play often. This technique is particularly effective if you can turn the situation into a puzzle or plot element for that player as well as the others. For example, you might place an adventure in the frozen north to provide a greater challenge for the salamander PC, who might be inclined to undertake a quest for Brendal's Ring of Frost Resistance. But use this tactic sparingly; it's no fun to play a monster PC when its weaknesses are constantly exploited and there's little opportunity to take advantage of its strengths.

You can also confound power gamers by creating roleplaying challenges that cannot be overcome by a massive attack bonus or an overused special ability. Consider the social aspects of the monster's presence in the campaign, and use them as the foundations for adventures and quests. Perhaps it's the monster PC's responsibility to gain acceptance for its kind in the human lands, to provide inspiration for others of its tribe by becoming a famous and virtuous hero, or to prove that not all monsters are dumb or evil. If you're willing to spend some time exploring the history of that monster and its place within your game world, you'll find plenty of interesting material that you and the player can use to establish the character's goals. While you're at it, look for ways to incorporate plot hooks into the character's background. There's nothing like an exciting adventuring opportunity to give a PC some direction, and who knows? Your power gamer just might realize that there's more to gaming than successful number-crunching.

If you're still worried about how a monster will impact your game when used as a PC, especially in the hands of a power gamer, consider asking the player to test out the idea by running a monster NPC for a session or two. Setting up a single session with a whole party of monster PCs is another option. If the situation looks promising after one or more such "trial runs," it's probably safe to take the plunge and allow a monster PC. Just let the player know in no uncertain terms that the character is being allowed on a trial basis.

5 WAYS TO INSPIRE POWER GAMERS

1. Create interesting and inspiring NPC role models of the same monster kind.
2. Introduce a prophecy that concerns the monster PC species its whole species—and potentially leads to a great reward, of course.
3. Offer a roleplaying-oriented challenge from a rival.
4. Develop a plot hook that promises gold—perhaps profits or a lump sum award for establishing good racial relations or mutually advantageous trade agreements.
5. Play to the monster character's pride by offering it an opportunity to earn acceptance, status, or privilege, both for itself and for its kind.

CHALLENGE TWO: Getting PCs to Accept a Monster as a Party Member

The first hurdle a monster PC faces is acceptance into the party. What group of humans, elves, gnomes, and dwarves in their right minds would blithely adopt a troll, shadow, or other monster as a traveling companion? There are plenty of reasons why they shouldn't, and the player might not be able to achieve this goal alone. But with your help as DM, the player of a monster character can attack this challenge on two fronts, hopefully winning over both the players and the characters.

Gaining Player Support

The players' worries probably center around how the presence of a monster in the party will affect their characters specifically and game play in general. You can stave off most objections and concerns with a little forethought and communication. Before agreeing to a player's request for a monster character, bring the matter up for group discussion. You don't necessarily need to ask for permission from your players, but you should note any negative feedback and either address it yourself or let the player with the monstrous character respond. Some questions will inevitably come as a surprise, but there are several

MONSTER PC FAQ

Below are several frequently asked questions (FAQ) that players might have about a monster PC, along with possible responses that are likely to avert grumbling.

1. "Will the monster PC hog the spotlight? Will our characters get dragged into a bunch of plots that are just about the monster character?"

"No. Bob and I have already worked out the details concerning the character's background, abilities, and other issues. During the game, he'll have the same amount of time each round that you do to take actions. And I've developed the same number of side-plots and encounters for Bob's monster PC as I have for each of your characters. In fact, Bob's character has inspired me to create even more special plots and tie-ins for your PCs. All that will be revealed in the future . . . if your characters live that long."

2. "Why I wasn't given the option to play a monster?"

"I didn't think about it at the beginning of the campaign—my apologies. This idea is only an experiment for now, and I'm going to keep a close eye on game balance to make sure that Bob's monster character has no unfair advantages over yours. Later on, if you're still interested, maybe you can play a monster as well."

3. "Does the monster PC pose a threat to our characters? Does it have a breath weapon that our PCs could get caught in, or poisonous skin that they could brush against, or a berserk rage ability that could be blindly turned against the party?"

"No. I've studied all the abilities of Bob's character, and they are no more dangerous to your PCs than your weapons and spells are to his!"

4. "Does the character have dangerous allies or kin that might threaten the party and jeopardize its mission?"

"Perhaps—but I can't reveal all my secrets, you know. However, let me state for the record that I'm more worried about Bob's PC meeting Dave's character's mother-in-law than I am about your PCs meeting his relatives."

5. "What happens when we get to town? Will the monster get us into a lot of trouble all the time?"

"I've given this matter a great deal of consideration and tweaked the campaign world to ensure that current and future adventures can proceed as planned—your characters willing of course. Bob's PC will certainly create some interesting roleplaying situations, but all the planned encounters should unravel in the usual chaotic fashion that your characters' meddling causes. Personally, I think Dave's character with the 6 Charisma poses a greater roleplaying threat than Bob's PC."

that you can anticipate and prepare answers for ahead of time (see Monster PC FAQ sidebar).

Gaining Character Support

From a roleplaying standpoint, the characters might have many of the same worries that the players have. Does the monster pose a threat in any way? Will its presence hamper the party's ability to complete the mission successfully?

To address these issues, first read the Monster PC FAQ sidebar and note any valid concerns that the characters might have. Next, create a pair of encounters that can serve the twin purposes described below: introducing the monster PC to the party and giving it a chance to demonstrate what a great team player it can be. These two encounters should be designed specifically to assuage the PCs' fears and answer their objections through in-game roleplaying.

The Introduction

The first encounter introduces the monster PC to the party. Its purpose is to net the monster an offer to join the group—or at least to create an atmosphere in which its request to join won't be instantly denied. The encounter must also directly address any objections the players voiced during group or private discussions, as well as any other issues you've anticipated. Since actions speak louder than words, the encounter should allow the monster PC to demonstrate its values, principles, and abilities in front of the other characters. For example, a tough combat encounter in which the monster tips the scales in the PC's favor by jumping into melee on their side should guarantee the creature a fair hearing afterward. A situation in which the monster PC can aid the other characters in a noncombat encounter—perhaps by revealing a clue, solving a puzzle, pointing out a trap, or revealing intelligence about a foe—can also succeed. However, the creature might have a rougher time selling the party on the benefits of its continued presence in this case.

You can make the task of gaining acceptance easier for the monster PC in several ways. First, you can give it an opportunity to demonstrate clearly where its allegiances lie. For example, if the monster PC is a troll, you might arrange an encounter with some evil troll cultists that the creature wouldn't hesitate to attack. You could also provide the other PCs with a means of detecting alignment or lies, such as a limited-use magic item with which they can verify the monster PC's claims. If the characters already have access to such magic, be sure to remind them of it should the roleplaying start to turn against the monster character.

The Team Player

The second encounter should occur shortly after the first, before any important interaction with NPCs occurs. This encounter should reinforce the monster's reliability and potential benefit to the party, so that the other PCs can begin to relax in its presence. It would be ideal if the event also encouraged all the PCs to work together as a team. The team player encounter could be action-oriented, or it could require the monster to use a unique skill or ability it possesses to help the PCs solve a problem. In the latter case, be sure that the monster cannot succeed alone—ideally, the situation should require contributions from all the PCs.

Consider revealing some of the monster's background and goals at this point as well. The benefits of sharing such information with the group are many—such a tactic can help weave the creature into the general party storyline, offer further proof that it was telling the truth in the prior encounter, and provide more material for the group to use in roleplaying. Once this encounter is over, the monster PC should be a full member of the group, and the other PCs should be so comfortable with the concept that they won't hesitate to stick up for their new comrade should such support be required.

CHALLENGE THREE: Communication and Movement

The ability to communicate and to keep up with the rest of the group is critical for a monster PC. If the monster PC that your player has proposed is likely to have difficulty in either of these areas, you can always forbid the use of that creature as a PC. If you choose to allow it, you should take steps to address the problem before beginning play.

Communication

A monster character that can't interact with others soon becomes quite boring to play. In such a situation, the monster PC often becomes a burden to the party or, even worse, a trigger-happy, action-oriented bundle of campaign chaos. Most of the time such unhappy outcomes can be avoided simply by requiring that players choose characters with at least a 3 Intelligence: Since all monsters with a 3 Intelligence can understand the Common language, the problem is neatly avoided. With certain creatures of low Intelligence, however, not even solutions such as these are reasonable.

Take a poll of the party to find out what languages the other characters can speak. Allow the monster character to substitute one of the more common tongues for one if its own, so that it can communicate with as many of the characters as possible. When using this tactic, you might also wish to consider the creature's normal psychology. If a monster is so alien that it is unfamiliar with humans and humanoid experience, you and the player must work together to decide how the creature goes about grasping concepts that are foreign to its nature and communicating them to others. Again, this obstacle represents a great opportunity to flesh out your campaign and your game world, as well as the PC's background.

Communicating with the other PCs is the first priority for a monster character. If the creature can impart its thoughts and ideas to its comrades in some relatively simple way—be it through a common language, telepathy, or the power of a special magic item—then its player can actively participate in group discussions and feel involved. The monster's second priority is the ability to interact with NPCs and the rest of the world. It's possible that the other characters could act as interpreters for their comrade, but such dependency tends to become a burden over time unless it's carefully orchestrated and performed by players who enjoy the roleplaying challenge. The optimum situation is one in which the monster PC can interact with other creatures just as freely as the other PCs can.

MOVEMENT CONSTRAINTS

The following examples represent movement considerations that should be addressed before beginning play.

Slow speed: A creature with a speed of 5 feet can't keep up with the party unaided.

Unusual amount of space required for movement: A flying creature requires plenty of room to take off.

Movement limited to one type of terrain: A swimming creature can move only through water.

Movement has obvious campaign consequences: A burrowing creature can ruin roads.

Movement constitutes a weakness in certain situations: A creature that must assume gaseous form to move is vulnerable during storms.

Getting Around

The ability to move quickly and the freedom to travel in many locales are also important for adventuring monsters. If a creature has obvious travel constraints, look for in-game ways to cope with the problem where possible. The Movement Constraints sidebar notes those potential difficulties.

CHALLENGE FOUR: Equipment and Architecture

Many monster PCs are significantly larger or smaller than a standard-race PC, and some have unusual body shapes or abilities that damage objects. Acquiring equipment they can use and finding structures that can comfortably accommodate them can be major challenges for players and DM alike.

The Right Stuff

A monster PC could face many equipment challenges that standard-race PCs don't. Size issues top the list—since most equipment is made for Medium-size or Small humanoids, larger and smaller creatures often have difficulty acquiring weapons, armor, and other equipment that they can use.

A creature with an unusual body shape, limb configuration, or number of digits might also need specially made equipment. The need for custom armor goes without saying in such a case, but weapons and other equipment might also require significant revision.

Finally, special abilities can wreak particular havoc with equipment. Breath weapons, acidic blood, flaming skin, and other physical traits can render normal items useless in short order. Even the most mundane items must often be specially treated to render them usable by a monster PC.

If altering the creature's age is an option, consider starting the PC as a young monster. Youngsters tend to be smaller than adults, and they often have lower Strength scores and underdeveloped special abilities. As such, they can usually make use of relatively standard equipment. As the PC grows older, larger, and stronger, it should be able to accumulate resources for equipment upgrades through its shares of the party treasure.

To that end, you can also place NPCs who specialize in making customized equipment at various points within your campaign world. Such craftsmen should be capable of far more extensive customization than just moving a crossbow trigger to a more convenient location or manufacturing thieves' tools with bigger handles. If needed, your monster PC should be able to find a weaponsmith who can make a slime-resistant, sure-grip weapon. A craftsman who routinely caters to the needs of monsters is unlikely to be repulsed or frozen with fear in the PC's presence, and he probably has a good eye for assessing a particular creature's needs.

Another method of providing specialized equipment for a monster PC is to place the occasional adventure in that creature's native land. The presence of others of its kind gives the monster an opportunity to buy, borrow, or steal proper equipment.

The fact that monster PCs often require special equipment provides an easy way to vary treasure hoards in your game. While the other PCs are obsessed with finding +5 swords, the monster character might be ecstatic over masterwork weapons and armor. Also, don't overlook the opportunity to give a piece of monstrous equipment a unique history or design that makes it special to the character in more ways than just size and usability. For example, perhaps a mind flayer PC hears of a magic crossbow made especially for use with tentacles. This event could spawn a special side-adventure for the PCs as they seek out its owner or creator.

Interior Design

Architecture can impose discouraging restrictions on a monstrous PC, particularly one that is too large for the structures in which the action takes place. Before each session, look over each of your encounter settings to ensure that the monster PC can get in and participate. If the characters must slip through a narrow cave opening to enter the Dungeon Of Utmost Despair, have an alternate entrance available (and detectable) for the monster PC to use. While not many inns have doors and chairs that can accommodate the girth and weight of a xorn, a cellar with a wide entrance and a stone bench by the hearth could be added to make the PC comfortable.

CHALLENGE FIVE: Social Acceptance

The biggest challenge the typical monster character faces is acceptance by your game world's civilized societies. Unless the PCs are going to be holed up in dungeons for most of their careers, some form of social interaction has to take place. Most player characters don't enjoy being run out of every town and village at swordpoint because they are in the company of a monster, so it's up to you to provide some logical way for the monster to fit in peacefully. Although some game worlds and campaigns lend themselves to monster PCs better than others, there is no single, quick way to ensure that monsters will be welcomed with open arms in all the villages, towns, and cities. Consider each of the following options and use a combination that doesn't stretch the logic of your campaign world too far.

Broad Tolerance

Create a society that is tolerant of the PC's monster type, or of intelligent, nondestructive monsters in general. (Think of the cantina scene in the *Star Wars* movie, where a variety of monsters coexisted in relative peace.) Monsters might be accepted everywhere, or perhaps just within a single culture that forms a safe pocket of open-mindedness in a xenophobic world. In such a society, some cultures might accept or even ally with certain monsters, creating a politically charged environment. Alternatively, a rumor that monsters of the PC's kind are blessed, valuable, cursed, or simply powerful enough to be justly feared could allow the PC to live unmolested. The Nameless Legion from issue #304 is a good example of an organization that makes it easy to bring monstrous PCs into a campaign.

The Hero Strategy

Set up an adventure that results in the monster PC becoming a hero to a standard-race community. Any creature that has rendered great service to a people or made a significant sacrifice on behalf of a community is usually accepted, whether it is a monster or not. Such a scenario supplies incentive, reward, adventure hooks, action, roleplaying opportunities, and more. Consider planting the seed for such an adventure with legends about a historical, legendary monster-hero who won acceptance and respect. (Think of the ogiers from Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time novels.) If the scenario plays out as planned, the lesson that the monster PC learns about earning acceptance could come into play during future adventures as well.

Hide the Monster's Identity

Make sure the PCs have access to potions, wands, spells, skills, and feats that can help the monster maintain a disguise. The constant need for scrolls and potions of *change self* or *alter self* can create numerous adventure hooks all by itself. Alternatively, more traditional methods of disguise, such as masks and costumes, might be employed to hide the creature, depending on the monster type. If you're an especially benevolent DM, you might even place powerful magic items useful for disguise in treasure hoards for the PCs to find. Whatever means of disguise you make available, this tactic offers oodles of roleplaying and adventure opportunities. Perhaps a rival suspects the monster PC's true identity and seeks to uncover it

publicly, before witnesses. Or maybe an adventure during which the character's disguise keeps slipping at inopportune moments creates some needed comic relief.

Create Alibis and Excuses

Encourage the monster PC's player and the rest of the group to come up with some good excuses before entering a town. ("He's been polymorphed by a wizard." "He's been cursed." "I'm really half-human, you know.") Using humor coupled with the appropriate skill check is a good in-character trick to adjust an NPC's attitude upward (see Table 5-4 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), and it encourages roleplaying as well. ("You think I'm ugly now, you should have seen me as a baby!") Let the players scour the comics in back issues of *Dragon Magazine* for some good punch lines.

Check It Out!

Allow NPCs liberal access to *detect thoughts* spells and effects. If such means are readily available, local authorities won't hesitate to use them to determine whether a monster PC poses any threat (other than through carelessness or accident) to society. Perhaps the lawful churches pump out plenty of potions and scrolls for the gate guards, who use them while questioning monster PCs and other unusual visitors about their intentions. A citizenry confident in its government's ability to weed out evil beings is likely to accept strange foreigners and monsters in its midst.

Use Monster NPCs to Set Expectations

If a society already includes a few well-known monster citizens, a monster PC has a greater chance of earning acceptance. In addition, such NPCs make excellent potential mentors, craftsmen for special equipment, and role models. A PC frustrated with abuse from other folk might seek out a fellow "monster" for advice and words of encouragement about getting along with other races.

They Live to Serve

In this arrangement, members of the PC's species perform some ongoing, valuable service to society and are therefore generally accepted. For example, hobgoblins might serve as round-the-clock laborers on the docks and in warehouses because of their darkvision and their ability to coordinate operations. Or perhaps tamed ettins are used as pack animals. In nongood societies, ghouls might even be used to guard noble graveyards and mausoleums at night. Possible storylines abound in this kind of campaign environment, and you can make monster PCs critical to many plots and adventures.

The Queen's Favor

If the party has performed a valuable service for a noble, politician, or wealthy merchant, that NPC could use her influence to help the monster PC become accepted by the community. The NPC can vouch for the monster character, or possibly even command acceptance anywhere it is not freely given. An alternate reward would be to place the monster in the NPC's employ, thus granting it some status and protection—and giving you more adventure hooks and opportunities in the bargain.

They're All Over

Create a foreigner's ward or district in your city where monsters can roam freely. Perhaps a society forced to tolerate monsters shunts them away to a specific neighborhood or area, where they can cause little damage. The monster PC could use such an area for its base and make forays into other districts until its status changes.

When using this kind of arrangement, avoid thinking in black and white terms—that is, don't assume that the monster must either be accepted or killed. Instead, work out a few different social levels within the society and give the PC's race acceptance within at least one level. Such a situation gives the character a zone of safety from which to explore, train, and operate. Creating a single zone of acceptance also helps you integrate monsters into existing cultures without shaking up the campaign world too much.

Conversely, you might create a polarized monster society in which one side is barbaric, evil, chaotic, and truly monstrous, while the other group is lawful, benign, good, and civilized. The lawful group is welcomed by society, and it's up to the monster character to convince NPCs which group it belongs to.

Bread and Circuses

Create exotic urban environments—fighting pits, arenas, circuses, theatres, side-shows, bazaars, and markets—in which monster NPCs and PCs thrive. Such areas are ideal for encounters and adventures, and they can also provide perfect settings for monstrous craftsmen, contacts, and informants. In places such as these, NPCs are concerned only about the color of the customer's money, not the deadliness of its breath or the number of limbs it has.

CONCLUSION

Including one or more monster characters in a standard party is a challenge for players and Dungeon Masters alike, but it can breathe new life into your games and serve as a source of great inspiration. As DM, you need to think ahead and ensure that the monster PC can interact with others, travel without much difficulty, and fit into society reasonably well. Remember, if you make the monster too difficult to manage as a character, you risk frustrating all the players, not just the one running that PC. But with a little careful planning and some open communication, fitting monster player characters into the party isn't difficult or awkward at all—it's almost as if they belonged there all along. And maybe they did at that.

The Play's the Thing

POWER PLAYS
MOVE AND SPELL COMBOS

by Michael Mearls

Adventurers band together in small groups because simple logic dictates that a party of explorers has a better chance of surviving a dungeon than a single adventurer traveling on his own. A fighter needs a cleric to heal his wounds, a wizard relies on a rogue to find traps, and so forth. Part of the fun in D&D is that each character class can do things that no other class in the game can accomplish. Fighters with their many feats are the best at standing toe to toe against powerful monsters, while clerics can support their allies and blast the undead out of existence. With a good spread of classes, a party has the capabilities to overcome almost any challenge.

While the classes each specialize in a specific area, sometimes the combination of two classes, abilities, or spells is more powerful than any character working on his own. Some players lock on to their characters' roles and fail to see the power of teamwork. The classic example is the combination of a fighter and a rogue. With their poor hit points and armor, rogues should try to avoid melee. However, if a heavily armed and armored fighter can occupy a monster, a rogue can slip in for a sneak attack. With the monster flanked, the fighter has a better chance to hit while the rogue's sneak attack quickly wears down its hit points. Alone, the rogue is overmatched by many monsters. A fighter might be able to defeat an opponent, but the fight leaves him wounded and poorly prepared for the next battle. Together, the two can defeat a monster faster and more efficiently.

This article presents a variety of combinations that allow you to improve your combat potential. While each character class has its specialty, sometimes the combination of two abilities is more powerful than the individual talents. Some of these combinations arise when two or more characters team up, while others are enabled if you select spells and feats and use them together by yourself or with another character.

Aid Another + Spring Attack: The aid another action is an often-overlooked option in combat that can be used in combination with Spring Attack. A character with Spring Attack can move in to a melee and use the aid another action to give a tougher ally an AC or attack bonus, and then he can move away, avoiding an attack of opportunity and distancing himself from harm. This tactic works best for characters low on hit points, wearing weak armor, or lacking a weapon that can deal damage to a creature as it allows them to make a contribution to the fight without unnecessarily endangering themselves.

***Burning Hands* + Oil Flask:** While *burning hands* normally lacks the punch of *magic missile* and other 1st-level arcane spells due to a short range, with a little help it can rival many 1st- or 2nd-level combat spells. Hit your opponents with flasks of oil, then follow up with *burning hands* to damage them with the spell and set them alight. Remember, *burning hands* ignites flammable materials. A goblin barbarian drenched in oil qualifies as flammable.

Charm Monster* + *Polymorph Other: When used in combination, these two spells can produce whatever sort of monstrous support you require. Use *charm monster* to bind an ogre, minotaur, or another monster with a poor Will save. Once the creature is under your power, and assuming you can converse with it, you might be able to convince it to accept a *polymorph other* spell and turn it into an elephant, warhorse, or some specific creature whose services you need. In a dungeon where you cannot normally bring a horse, this combination allows you to produce a mount for the party's paladin or fighter. In combat, these two spells combined with *dispel magic* can serve to produce an unpleasant surprise for your enemies. Use *polymorph other* to turn your charmed creature into a Tiny creature, order it to sneak forward among the enemy, then use *dispel magic* or a second *polymorph other* to return it to its original form. With any luck, the sudden appearance of a fearsome monster sends your enemies into a panic while catching them between the party and their newfound opponent.

Dimension Door* + *Feather Fall: Your DM is liable to wince when you bring out this trick, but what it lacks in

subtlety it compensates for with brute force. This trick only works outdoors, since you need a nice, open space above your opponent and a big, heavy object like a boulder nearby. First, cast *feather fall* to prepare yourself for this trick. Next, move over to a large object that was outside the area of your *feather fall* spell, and cast *dimension door* to appear 100 feet above your opponent. And since traveling alone is never fun, touch the large object and take it with you. You can transport up to 50 pounds per level with *dimension door*, allowing you to bomb a monster with a giant rock while you float to safety. However, since you also land on or near the monster, either use a rock big enough to crush your target or use *fly* or *levitate* to escape to safety.

Fly + **Paladin's Mount:** Particularly useful at mid-levels, this combination grants the entire party the potential to fly up cliffs, across dangerous areas, or over gaping chasms. Since *fly* allows the affected creature to carry gear and equipment as normal, a horse given this spell can carry a rider while flying. A paladin's mount is intelligent enough to fly without panicking and throwing its rider. Otherwise, anyone riding a horse granted *fly* must make a Ride check (DC 15) to properly guide the mount. When facing an obstacle, the flying horse can ferry characters to safety one by one. In a pinch, the *mount* spell forms an effective combo with *fly*.

Each character class can do things that no other class can accomplish.

Freedom of Movement + *Solid Fog* or *Web:* This combo allows you to ignore the penalty a spell inflicts in an area, leaving your opponents mired down while you fight at full efficiency. *Freedom of movement* allows its recipient to ignore the effects of *solid fog* or *web*. While those two spells bog down or trap monsters, the party's fighter can wade in and defeat them. This combination works wonders against large numbers of creatures. A fighter can move into the *web* unhindered and fight them one at a time. Not only are your foes unable to use their numbers to their advantage, but they suffer penalties to their attacks and actions.

Light + **Far Shot:** When exploring a dungeon or the wilderness at night, sometimes you need to see what lies ahead without exposing you to any unnecessary danger. Use *light* or *daylight* on an arrow, and then have an archer with Far Shot loose the arrow to illuminate the dark area in question.

Shield Other + *Stoneskin:* This powerful combination can turn the most fearsome monster into little more than an inconvenience. First, the party's wizard or sorcerer casts *stoneskin* on a fighter, barbarian, or other frontline combatant. Next, the cleric casts *shield other* on him. In battle, the *stoneskin* reduces the damage the fighter takes before it is divided in half and split between him and the cleric who cast *shield other*. A creature that deals 40 points of damage with one blow (and is not able to negate the damage reduction) in effect inflicts a mere 15 points of damage to each character. In essence, the creature now takes two or three rounds to deal its average damage. While this exposes the cleric to a fair amount of damage, a few *cure* spells can help keep that from becoming a problem. The *stoneskin* absorbs enough damage to prevent the *shield other* spell from overwhelming its caster. This strategy works poorly against area of effect attacks, since the cleric might be forced to shoulder damage twice from one source. Other defensive spells, such as *resist elements*, can have a similar effect when teamed with *shield other*.

Silence + **Illusions:** Most veteran players and intelligent monsters know that simple, low-level illusions cannot generate sound. Almost anyone who has played D&D for long knows to be suspicious of any spectral images that move silently. You can take advantage of this by combining *silence* with *silent image* to fool your opponents. An NPC wizard could mistake an approaching fighter with *silence* for an illusion, especially if he is accompanied by one or more *silent images*. Enemy archers might ignore the real threat to target the illusions, in effect creating a *mirror image* for a fighter, paladin, or barbarian.

Silence + *Invisibility:* The 2nd-level spell *silence* is perhaps the easiest way to nullify an enemy spellcaster, but its low level makes it easy for powerful casters and monsters to resist with a saving throw or spell resistance. The easiest way around this is to cast *silence* on an object, but even this can prove problematic. If your opponent knows the source of a *silence* spell, he can use *dispel magic* or other means to eliminate it. Unless, of course, the object is invisible. Use *invisibility* to hide a creature (or your familiar), and have it carry a rock, arrow, or other small trinket that bears a *silence* spell. An enemy spellcaster must waste precious time locating the source of the *silence* before he can cope with it.

Charm Person or *Charm Monster* + **Any Other Spell:** Many players overlook the fact that a creature can willingly suspend its saving throw or drop its spell resistance against a spell. A charmed creature views your words and actions in the most favorable way and might comply with a request to accept another spell. Don't try this trick if your character isn't good at bluffing. D

Sage Advice

CLASS ABILITIES EXPLAINED
OFFICIAL ANSWERS

by Skip Williams

This month The Sage considers the ins and outs of "unplayable" characters in the D&D game and also sheds light on readers' difficulties with various character class abilities. You can email your questions to The Sage at TSRsage@aol.com.

Some of my friends and I have been arguing about the character reroll rule from the Character Creation Basics section at the beginning of the *Player's Handbook*. Some of us say you can reroll your character only if your ability modifiers total 0 or less and your highest ability score is 13 or lower. (That is, you must meet both conditions before you can reroll.) Others say you can reroll if you meet either condition. For example, which of the following characters would be playable?

12 (+1)	14 (+2)
10 (+0)	9 (-1)
10 (+0)	9 (-1)
10 (+0)	9 (-1)
10 (+0)	9 (-1)
10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Both sets of example abilities meet one condition or the other. The first example has a high ability score of 13 or lower. The second example has ability modifiers that total -3. Both sets of ability scores allow rerolls.

The rule on page 4 of the *Player's Handbook* says you may reroll your character if your total modifiers (before racial adjustments) are 0 or less *or* if your highest score is 13 or lower. That means you reroll if you meet either condition.

I play a devoted defender character from *Sword and Fist*. I was wondering when the Armor Class bonus effects my character. The AC bonus footnote implies that the bonus only applies when my character is defending his charge from an attack, but the AC bonus class feature section implies my character gets the bonus at all times. If my character gets it only when defending his charge does this mean that it only applies for harm's way? Or can my character be, say, 20 feet away from his charge and still give and get the AC bonus? My character uses both ranged and reach weapons.

A devoted defender gets a dodge bonus to Armor Class when actively defending her charge from attack (see Table 2-2: The Devoted Defender in *Sword and Fist*). The DM is free to define "actively defending her charge from attack," but the general intention is whenever the devoted defender is within 5 feet of her charge. There are conditions when the character will be denied a dodge bonus despite sticking with her charge (see page 119 in the *Player's Handbook*). A devoted defender never gives her charge an Armor Class bonus, although the devoted defender's harm's way and deflect attack abilities can protect attacks from hitting her charge.

The chart on page 59 in the *Epic Level Handbook* shows the bonus spell from the Improved Spell Capacity feat and the bonus spell for the high ability score. Am I right?

Right. If you've used Improved Spell Capacity to gain a spell slot of any level of 10 or higher, Table 1-35: Expanded Ability Modifiers and Bonus Spells in the *Epic Level Handbook* shows the correct number of spells and bonus spells for you. For example, if you're a wizard with an Intelligence score of 44 and you've gained a 10th-level spell slot through the Improved Spell Capacity feat, you get three 10th-level spells a day: one from the feat and two bonus spells from your Intelligence score.

If you're a specialist wizard, do you get a bonus spell for each spell level you gain from the Improved Spell Capacity feat?

Yes, when you're a specialist wizard and you get access to spells of a new spell level, you also get a bonus spell (of your specialty school) for that spell level.

The material for the tattooed monk prestige class in *Oriental Adventures* includes descriptions of several tat-

Borders illustrated by David Wahlstrom

toos the character can choose. Many of these descriptions say something like: "Once per day per tattoo he possesses, the tattooed monk . . ." What is "per tattoo he possesses" supposed to mean? Do you count up all the tattoos the monk has? Does the monk have to choose the same tattoo more than once to get extra uses of that tattoo each day? For example, let's say a character has three levels of tattooed monk, and therefore two tattoos. One is the bamboo tattoo and one is the bat tattoo. Can the tattooed monk gain an enhancement bonus to his Constitution score (from the bamboo tattoo) once or twice a day? Does this also hold true when the descriptions talk about adding the number of tattoos? For example, how big can the character's enhancement bonus to his Constitution be?

The phrases "once per day per tattoo he possesses" and "add the number of tattoos" both refer to the number of tattoos the character has gained as a tattooed monk. The example character can boost his Constitution score by 2 points twice a day (because the character has two tattoos, including the bamboo tattoo). The character also can boost his Dexterity score by 2 points twice a day (courtesy of his bat tattoo).

What is the difference between a Knowledge check and a bardic knowledge check? When a bard uses her bardic knowledge ability, does she use the DCs listed in the Knowledge skill? If not, how do you determine the DC for a bardic knowledge check? When she uses a Knowledge skill, does a bard add her level to the roll as she does for a bardic knowledge check?

To put it simply, bardic knowledge is a feature of the bard class and as such it is available only to characters with one or more bard levels. The various Knowledge skills are simply skills, and as such they are available to anyone who spends skill points to get ranks in them.

The bardic knowledge class feature and the various Knowledge skills also represent knowledge gained in different ways. The class feature reflects a bard's ability to pick up tidbits of information on almost any topic, just by virtue of being a bard and doing the things that bards do. Knowledge skills reflect the deliberate study of specific topics.

When a bard character uses her bardic knowledge class feature, you determine the DC according to the table on page 29 in the *Player's Handbook*. A quick reading of the table should make it clear that the basic factor in determining the DC for the check is how many other people know the information the bard seeks. The more people who know the information the bard seeks, the more likely it is that the bard has picked up that information serendipitously.

When any character, including a bard, uses a Knowledge skill, the factor that determines the DC is how easy or hard the question is. The more general and simple the question, the lower the DC. The more precise or exacting the question, the higher the DC.

In many cases, the DC for a bardic knowledge check or for a Knowledge check will be very similar, because not many people know the answers to really tough questions. On the other hand, some questions might be very difficult for a bard using bardic knowledge, but absurdly easy for anyone with the correct Knowledge skill. For example, a cleric with the Knowledge (religion) skill and a bard recover an idol from a ruin near a large city. Both characters might have a fairly easy time identifying the deity the statue depicts, but for different reasons. Let's say that idols like the one the characters have found are fairly commonplace, and that the idol depicts a deity who was once fairly popular, but was killed in a very famous, heroic fight with the nastiest evil deity in the land. Because many people have seen idols like the one the bard and cleric have found, and because many people are familiar with the story of the deity's heroic death, the bardic knowledge DC will be pretty low, say DC 10. The cleric likewise would have an easy time (DC 10), not only because the deity is well known but because the deity once played an important role in divine affairs.

Now suppose the idol was found in some remote crypt far from civilization.The deity it depicts died in almost complete obscurity and has now all but passed from living memory, and is known only to religious scholars. In this case, the DC for a bardic knowledge check would be fairly high, say DC 25 or even DC 30. On the other hand, the cleric with the Knowledge (religion) skill is a religious scholar, and has a much easier time naming the deity, say DC 15 for the Knowledge (religion) check.

How high can a character's enhancement bonus to Constitution be?

It's probably true that any task with a low bardic knowledge DC also will have a low DC for the appropriate Knowledge skill (because scholars tend to know at least as much as common folk know), but tasks with high bardic knowledge DCs might not be so difficult for people with the right Knowledge skills.

The description of the lore class feature for the loremaster prestige class says loremasters gather knowledge just as bards do and can make knowledge checks as bards can. The text goes on to say the loremaster adds his level and his Intelligence modifier to the knowledge check. Does this mean that a loremaster adds his loremaster level Knowledge skill checks?

No, a loremaster adds his loremaster levels just to loremaster knowledge checks, which work just like bardic knowledge checks. (See the previous question.)

I am unable to come to a succinct understanding of how often a rogue should be able to make sneak attacks in certain conditions. For example, take a rogue who is armed with a bow and who also has darkvision. Suppose this rogue preys on creatures that can't see in the dark. The first round of combat is clear: As long as the target hasn't heard the rogue's approach, the target is flat-footed and subject to sneak attack damage from a ranged weapon (provided the rogue is within 30 feet, of course). The following rounds don't seem as clear. If the rogue is still out of vision range, can the rogue continue to make sneak attacks? What happens if the foes light up a torch? Can the rogue just step back into darkness and keep making sneak attacks? My gaming group is ready to decide that an attacker in complete darkness is effectively invisible to the defender, rendering him flat-footed and subject to sneak attacks. Is that a good idea?

If your foe can't see you, that foe loses his Dexterity bonus against your attacks and you can sneak attack the foe if you have the sneak attack ability and you meet the other requirements for a sneak attack. Being unseen due to darkness is just like being invisible.

It's worth noting that the rogue in your first example could make a sneak attack even if his foes heard him coming. Knowing that you're nearby or even knowing your approximate location (as might happen when the foe makes a successful Listen check or uses a special quality such as scent) doesn't make the foe any more able to defend himself. The foe must be able to observe your actions to use his Dexterity bonus to deny you a sneak attack.

There are a few ways creatures can avoid sneak attacks from unseen foes. For example, the blindsight special quality allows creatures to "see" the unseen, and the uncanny dodge class feature (see next question) allows characters to retain their Dexterity bonuses against foes they cannot see.

The description of the barbarian's uncanny dodge class feature says a barbarian retains his Dexterity bonus unless immobilized or held motionless due to magic. I understand this includes avoiding being caught flat-footed and sneak attacked unless the attacker has the barbarian flanked. What about other combat conditions that deny a character his Dexterity bonus, such as climbing, grappling, and the like?

The uncanny dodge ability is a function of the senses. It allows a character to retain his Dexterity bonus when others cannot because they don't have sufficient sensory information to do so, such as when one is surprised or facing an unseen foe (see the previous question).

If the character is actually rendered immobile (or nearly immobile) by some physical or magical effect, uncanny dodge doesn't help. If you're a barbarian hanging by your fingers and toes on a rock face, your feral senses don't improve your mobility. You can't use your Dexterity bonus, and you're subject to sneak attack. Grappling is a similar situation—if you're in another creature's grasp (or if you're gasping another creature) you lose your Dexterity bonus despite any uncanny dodge ability you might have.

Creatures with the improved grab special attack can retain their Dexterity bonuses while grappling by taking a -20 penalty to any grapple checks they make.

The description for the arcane trickster's (a prestige class from *Tome and Blood*) impromptu sneak attack ability says that one attack roll can be declared a sneak attack. Does this mean if one has, say, three attacks, the impromptu sneak attack is a full round attack for a single sneak attack roll? Or do the other attack rolls get included (as normal attacks) in the same round as the impromptu sneak attack roll?

You use impromptu sneak attack ability as part of the attack action or full attack action. If you use impromptu sneak attack with the full attack action, and you're entitled to more than one attack during that turn, you still get all of your attacks, but only one of those attacks (your choice) can be a sneak attack.

Other class features that can be used along with an attack once each turn also work this way. For example, a 12th-level monk can make three unarmed attacks with the full attack action. If the monk also uses her stunning attack ability, she still makes three unarmed attacks, but only one can be a stunning attack.

Is the assassin's **death attack considered a death effect** for purposes of raise dead?

Is the assassin's death attack considered a death effect for purposes of a *raise dead* spell? That is, can an assassination victim be raised, or must a *resurrection* spell be used?

Only attacks with the death descriptor (see page 152 in the *Player's Handbook*) interfere with the *raise dead* spell. The assassin's death attack does not have the death descriptor.

It's possible for a special attack to have a descriptor that is not specifically mentioned in its description, especially in the case of spell-like abilities. For example, the beholder's *finger of death* eye ray has the death descriptor because it duplicates the effects of a *finger of death* spell, which has the death descriptor.

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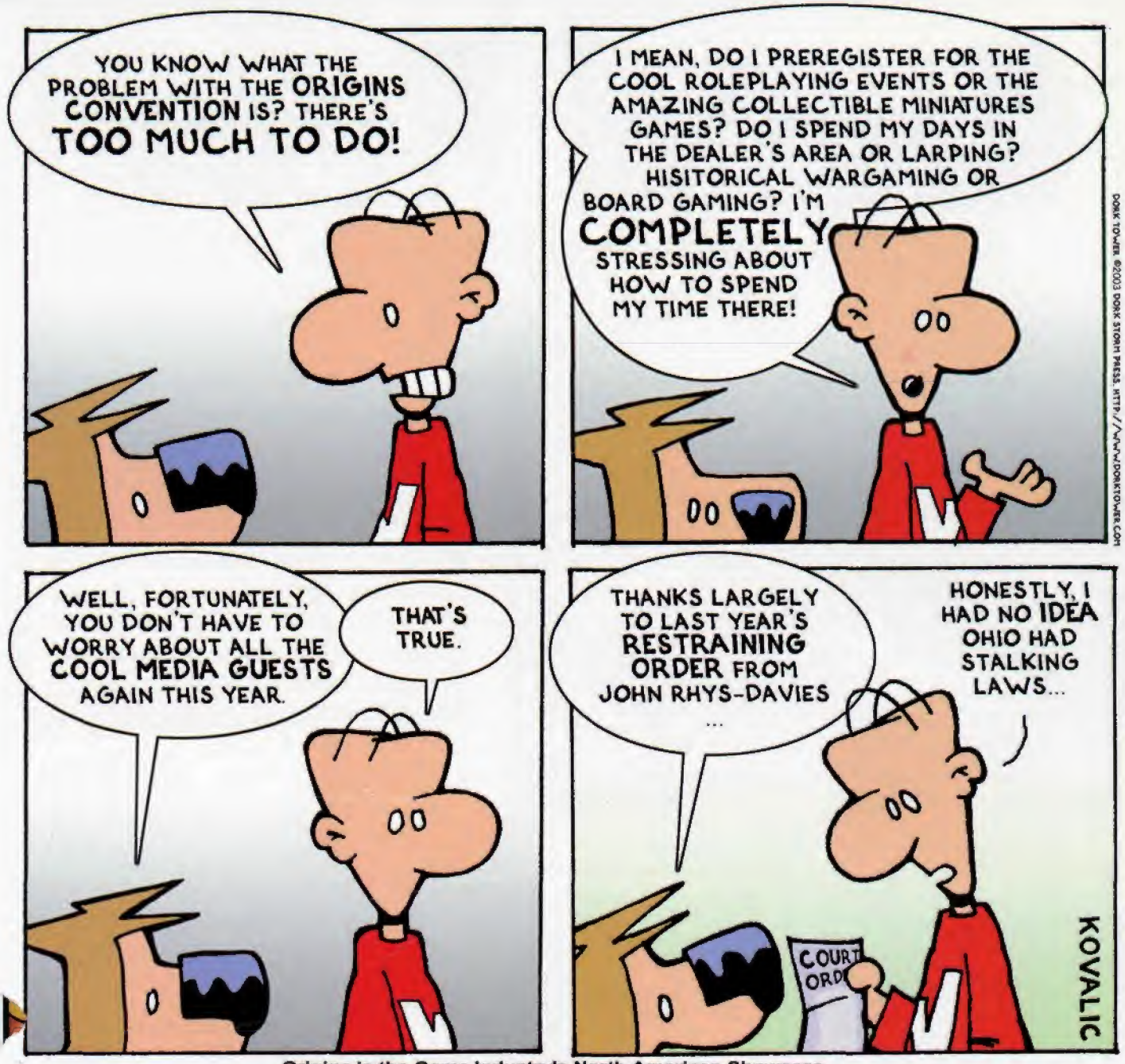

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